

# THE RATIONAL TEST

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L.S. KEYSER, D.D.



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# THE RATIONAL TEST

BIBLE DOCTRINE IN THE  
LIGHT OF REASON

BY

LEANDER S. KEYSER, D. D.

AUTHOR OF "IN BIRD LAND," "BIRDS OF THE ROCKIES," "OUR  
BIRD COMRADES," "THE ONLY WAY OUT," ETC.

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## THE VIEWPOINT

To show that certain fundamental Biblical doctrines, as held by orthodox believers, are reasonable—that is the chief purpose of this volume. The author's position is that reason should not be placed above the Bible; that is rationalism. Very often the proper attitude of the human mind before God's truth is, "Believing where we cannot prove." It is not irrational that it should be so, for in many of the commonest affairs of life we must often "walk by faith, and not by sight." The earliest acts of an infant in its mother's arms are acts of intuition and faith, not of reason; nor are such acts unusual throughout the entire course of life. Thinking men will not forget "the sweet reasonableness" of faith.

It is incorrect to think that faith and reason are opposed to each other. This error springs from the supposition that faith and credulity are synonymous terms. So far from this being true, it is an undisputed fact that many of the wisest and best men of the world possess the most childlike faith in Christ and His revelation. Superior knowledge makes a man conscious of the limitations of human learning, and, therefore, leads to humble trust and a childlike disposition. Whether faith is rational or not depends upon its object. Faith in that which is true and right is a most rational act of the soul; blindly to accept error is credulity, and is, therefore, irrational.

By means of an illustration we may see what a beautiful thing faith is, *per se*, if it is rightly directed and posited. When a little child, lying in its mother's

arms, looks up trustingly and lovingly into her face, and returns the smile on her lips, everyone declares that such an instinctive act of faith is an indication of the normal relation which should exist between a mother and her child. However, if the child shrinks from its mother and cries out with fear at her approach, we know that such a state of affairs is abnormal, proclaiming something radically wrong with the mother or the child, or with both. Thus we see that faith is a beautiful psychical act when it is rightly posited. On the other hand, doubt is by no means always rational, normal and ethical; for, in the home, the social life and the business world, it often works untold harm. One of the chief purposes of this book is to prove that faith in God, the Bible and Jesus Christ is a right and rational act of the human soul.

This is the place to say, too, that many Biblical doctrines never could have been discovered by man's unaided research. The method of creation, the origin of man, the genesis of evil, the plan of redemption in Christ—these are doctrines that had first to be revealed. However, after the revelation has been made in Holy Writ, we believe that the teachings can be justified by reason; that they can be defended by the rational process; that, at all events, they can be proved not to be unreasonable.

Again, our firm conviction is that unbelief and rationalism cannot be overcome by ridicule and denunciation. It is much more effective and Christian to treat the doubter kindly, answer his arguments convincingly, and prove that orthodoxy is rational. After all, no man can believe what seems to him to be absurd. Therefore, if you can by a logical process remove his intellectual difficulties, you are doing him a signal service, and may open to him the shining highway of evangelical faith. This is no concession to the rationalistic spirit; it is simply removing the stone

from the door of the sepulchre so that Lazarus may come forth alive. And it should be remembered that our Lord bids His disciples to do that much for every soul that is struggling in doubt. In leading men to faith, as in other Christian effort, we are co-workers with God.

At this point both fairness and modesty compel us to offer an explanatory remark. It would be presumption to contend that we have, in this volume, been able to prove absolutely to the unregenerate reason the truth of the doctrines considered. No; we make no such arrogant claim; we simply maintain that we have made an honest effort to remove difficulties, so that the doubter may be led to go to Christ Himself in penitence and faith for the final and convincing word of truth.

However, we repeat, it is neither wise nor ethical to berate and belabor the unbeliever. Do not declare harshly that "there are no sincere infidels," and call them all captious and perverse. Even if the assertion were true, you would never win the doubter by such ungracious speech; you would simply anger him and drive him further from the truth. But there *are* honest doubters. Treat them as if they were sincere and intelligent, and you may find the way to their reason, conscience and heart. The best way to win people is to be winsome.

We rejoice in the consciousness that we have been able to lead more than one doubter to Christ by first being gentle with him, then by trying to prove the rationality of Bible teaching, and thus overcoming, at least in part, the barriers in the way of faith. Even the believer is made all the happier and stronger when a Biblical teaching or incident, which once seemed to him to be quite hard to accept, has been shown to be right and rational.

Some of the chapters of this book deal with unbelief



pure and simple; a few of them touch somewhat upon the negative higher criticism; all treat of honest doubt. The volume has been written with the sincere hope that it may be the means of banishing the doubter's difficulties and strengthening the believer's faith.

L. S. K.

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# THE RATIONAL TEST

## I

### THE RATIONALE OF THEISM

THERE are at least two kinds of atheists in the world. It can hardly be denied that some men are atheists because the wish is father to the thought. Their lives are corrupt, and having no desire to repent or amend, it salves their consciences and quiets their uneasiness to believe that there is no Supreme Being to whom they are accountable. Such a view accords best with their epicurean philosophy, which might be summed up in the adage, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Of this class of atheists the Psalmist said, a little trenchantly: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

However, we hasten to add that not all doubters of the divine existence are doubters because they wish to lead bad lives. We know a doubter who, while he does not live like a spiritually-minded Christian, does live an upright life in many ways, and declares that he is just as much under moral obligation as any other man. He is known to be honest in his business relations almost to the point of scrupulosity. We should, therefore, never denounce men's motives in a wholesale style, even though they may go to the extremity of calling in question the existence of a personal God.

Such men have doubtless become skeptical on ac-

count of real intellectual difficulties. They think they see things in nature and in history that do not accord with the idea that the universe has been made by a kind, beneficent, and all-wise Being. Perhaps they have so long contemplated the sorrows of the world, the apparent cruelties of nature, and the seemingly haphazard way in which many things occur, that their eyes have become blinded to the amenities of life, the beauty and wise design in nature, the moral order of the world, and the sure indications that, in God's own time, all wrongs will be made right and all mysteries explained.

This chapter will be devoted to stating and amplifying several of the most cogent arguments for theistic belief, giving those first that are most easily comprehended; afterwards those that penetrate more deeply into the constitution of things.

First, the Bible is an intensely theistic book. In the first sentence the capital word is "God." All through its glowing pages God is immanent. While there is no labored argument anywhere in the Bible to prove the existence of a Supreme Being, His existence is everywhere taken for granted; His Spirit pervades it all, and is the basal rock of its philosophy of the world. No quotations are required to prove this, and we need only to stop here to indicate what it means in the logical process that the Bible is so pre-eminently a theistic book.

The most influential book in the world is the Bible—the book that has taken firmest hold on the thought of mankind, that has been the main factor in producing our present high state of civilization, that has regenerated the character of many nations and the lives of countless individuals. It is the Bible that has transformed many of the savage nations of the earth into highly moral communities. The Bible has won the homage of the strongest intellects of the world.



These, we take it, are indisputable facts. Now it argues much for the truth of such a book that it has wielded so potent an influence for good upon the human family. Is it likely that a book whose basal principle is false would have done more good in the world than any other book, or than all other books combined? If so, we are living in a world where error is more benignant than truth; and that makes the world a moral hodgepodge. Take any atheistic book that you can recall; how large has been its circulation? Into how many languages and dialects of the world has it been translated? How many people's lives have been transformed by its teaching? We challenge anyone to point to a single drunkard, or libertine, or wrong doer of any other kind, who has been reclaimed to a life of virtue through the teaching of atheism. On the other hand, thousands upon thousands of sinners of all kinds and degrees have been morally healed and saved through the power of Biblical teaching.

Thus the atheist is put into a *cul-de-sac*. His teaching infuses no hope into the heart, but rather destroys what it finds there; it comforts no sorrow; it inspires with no high ideals; it transfigures no lives; instead of putting moral fibre into men's natures, it is more likely to enervate them and give a loose reign to license. True, atheists may loudly profess an exalted regard for morality; yet they know well enough that, if their doctrines are true, they have no real basis for ethical distinctions, and can offer nothing but the baldest earthly and mercenary sanctions for right doing. Suppose, now, that atheism were true—we should then have the anomaly of the truth doing more harm than good, a philosophy that is contrary to every rational conception of right and wrong. On the other hand, suppose that the Bible is in error in its very first principle—its theistic teaching—then we have the spectacle of the most erroneous book in the world

being the best book in the world, the most potent for good. For our part, we should very much dislike to believe that we are living in a world so sadly disarranged as to make truth dangerous and harmful, while error is safe and beneficent.

Our next appeal is to what is often called the "universal consciousness" in the world of mankind. There is scarcely a nation on the globe that does not have a strong belief in some kind of a Supreme Being. Some travelers tell us that there are one or two exceptions to this rule. What are the exceptions? These very exceptions are the most convincing argument in favor of the almost universal principle. Somewhere in "darkest Africa" they tell us that there are a few tribes that have no appreciable conception of a God. What is the mental and moral status of those tribes? Are they educated, refined, civilized? No! they are the lowest people in the scale of humanity known to the ethnologist. It is a poor argument for atheism that its only tribal representatives in the world are the nearest to the brutes.

Otherwise, as has been said, all nations believe in a Supreme Ruler. And this is not merely a slight and ephemeral phase of human belief, but so powerful a faith that it lies at the basis and is the inspiring cause of vast systems of religion—systems that mold the national character and life. The fact is, in heathen countries, as in Christian, nothing is so potent as religion, nothing takes a deeper hold on life, nothing does more to fashion character. If there is no God, and the world came by chance, or is eternal, as you choose, how did the consciousness of God ever dawn upon the universal human heart? What brought about such a "fortuitous concourse of atoms"? Think of it for a moment—a world without a God, and yet a world with a most potent universal belief in God! If there is no God, how the human mind could have

ever conceived the idea of a God is beyond the power of reason or philosophy to solve. On the other hand, if there is a God, how easy, how simple the explanation of this general theistic belief! The apostle declares that "He hath not left Himself without a witness in any nation." There you have an adequate cause assigned for the universal effect.

The existence and structure of the universe furnish an irrefragable argument for theism. This argument we now desire to examine with some degree of thoroughness. Only two suppositions regarding the physical universe are possible—either it is eternal or it was created. If the former, there is no God; if the latter, there must be a God. What is the advantage to thought in the theistic view? It is this: It carries the mind back one step farther than does the atheistic view—that is, the atheist must stop with the material universe, while the theist goes back to the Infinite Person who made the universe. Therefore, the theistic view is the profounder; it goes farther and deeper into the primal cause of being. In the interest of pure thought this is a distinct advantage, for unbelief is wont to make the charge of narrowness and superficiality against opposing views, whereas we see that, in reality, atheism stops sooner than theism, and is therefore a shallower philosophy.

Let us put this in a little different way for the sake of deepening the impression. Atheism does not go back to the absolute; theism does. Atheism does not carry thought back as far as it can go; theism does. The proof of both statements is clear. By some mental effort your conception can go back—and that without a special strain—beyond the material world to a personal God who created all things; but if you should attempt to go back still farther, and ask, "Who then made God?" you will at once find thought frustrated; for if some other Being had created the God

you first conceived, then that other Being would be God, and the first being would be only a creature. If you try to go back farther and farther, you soon must simply stop thinking, for you can arrive at no end. You see, therefore, that when you go back to a personal Being as the cause of all things, you have reached the *ultima thule* of thought. Therefore, theism is the profoundest philosophy possible in the realm of human conception.

Nor is that all. We do not believe that rational thought can rest satisfied in the theory of an eternal material universe without a Creator. Ever and anon the mind wants to go back and back, and still farther back, through the eons of eternity, seeking for some beginning and some First Cause, but it can find no resting place, and so must give up the quest for utter weariness and despair. But is not the same thing true when we try to speculate on the eternity of God? We think not entirely. While it is true that speculation must stop when we attempt to contemplate the eternal nature of God pure and simple; yet somehow the mind—at least, most minds—do find rest and satisfaction in the conception of a personal Creator, who is self-existent, who holds within His own nature all the principles of conscious being, who needs not to be made, and who is all-wise, all-powerful, and perfect in goodness. There the wearied mind finds a resting place. Perhaps it is because this view gives an inspiring and glorious meaning to the universe. Be that as it may, thought grows quiescent in this view, and the heart finds a healing balm. Atheism, on the contrary, furnishes no rest for the mind and no medication for the heart.

Again, if the universe is uncreated and eternal, it must continue to go on in much the same way throughout another eternity. Generations will continue to come and go forever and ever, each struggling and



sorrowing and longing for a brief time, and then sinking into eternal oblivion. Or perhaps some great cataclysm will decimate the human family, and then the untenanted universe will roll on forever without purpose. Is that an inspiring prospect? Is that why the sun, moon and stars exist? Is that why the human body was made to fit so marvelously into its earthly environment and the human soul was endowed with longings for eternal life and blessedness? If that is all, life is a farce so senseless as to become tragedy, and the universe is a sphinx's riddle that shall never, never be deciphered. Let who will accept such a view. Side by side with this hopeless and helpless philosophy, place the system of Christian theism, and you have the contrast of light and darkness, of hope and despair.

We regard the following as an unanswerable mode of reasoning. Remember the atheist's fundamental principle—that matter must be eternal, because if it ever had a beginning, it must have had a Creator. Now, the science of the day teaches that the universe has been undergoing a process of development or evolution. Perhaps no atheist who knows anything about astronomy, geology and biology will deny this. The nebular hypothesis is pretty generally accepted by scientific teachers. The universe is an unfolding mechanism or organism, as you please. The development has been from the dead, nebulous primordial matter up to the present form of the universe with its central sun and revolving planets and its manifestations of life and intelligence on the earth. Let us remember, then, that, according to the last dictum of science, the universe is, and always has been, a developing universe. Think for a moment, it *must* be a developing universe, for there is testimony everywhere, at least on the earth, that the natural realm was not always what it is now.



From this premise note the reasoning carefully: If, as the atheist maintains, the universe is eternal, and is, and always has been, a developing mechanism, *then it ought ages on ages ago to have reached its present stage of unfolding.* Hold that thought rigid in the mind, and see whether it must not be so. Indeed, you cannot conceive of a time when the universe should not have been what it is now; yea, when it should not have reached its utmost limit of development. No other conclusion is logical, for the universe had an eternity in which to evolve. But since at the present time it has reached only a certain point in its evolution, it *must have begun to develop in time, not in eternity.* Therefore a developing universe could not be eternal, and the atheist's proposition is overthrown.

The reasoning may be carried a little further. The atheist may shift his position by saying that while matter is eternal, the evolution began at a certain point in time. Ah! but suppose the original condition of matter to have been that of perfect quiescence for unnumbered cycles of ages, how could it have begun to develop without the injection of a new force from without? One of the first and simplest principles of physics is that matter is inert; therefore, if matter was once perfectly quiescent, it never could have initiated motion or progress by its own inherent power alone. Some force external to itself must have moved it, and that force must have been a personal, self-determining Mind. Is any other possibility thinkable?

Let us illustrate this as vividly as we can. We are sitting at our writing-table, on which lies our hand Bible. Matter being endued with the attribute of inertia, the Bible would remain lying on the desk forever if no power external to itself would move it. Even the tyro in the science of physics will admit that. Matter in and of itself cannot originate motion. How-

ever, there is one thing in the world, and only one, that *can* originate motion. Let us see. By an exercise of my will—a faculty of my mind—I decide that the Bible shall move; I stretch out my hand and grasp the book, and lift it above my head; then I swing it to and fro; then I lower it and lay it upon the desk; then I pick it up again and carry it into the next room, and hand it to a friend. Do you observe? When I *will* that the book shall remain quiet, it lies at rest on my desk; when I *will* that it shall move, I cause it to move. The one thing in the world that can by an act of its own volition originate motion is mind. Matter never can. Mind ever can, and mind only.

Go back, now, to the original condition of the universe, the primordial nebulae. Suppose it was entirely in a state of repose. It never could have originated motion because of its elemental law of inertia. How, then, did motion begin? There is only one kind of entity in the universe that can initiate motion (or anything else), and that is *mind*. *Mind*, which has the innate power of self-determination and self-activity. Therefore, *Mind* must have acted on the pristine particles of quiescent matter and started them upon the era of atomic movement. That Mind must have been of such an order as to answer to all our conceptions of a personal God.

Should the reply be made that motion, like other laws of matter, is eternal, we fall back on our former argument that an eternally developing universe is impossible, because in that case it should have reached its highest stage of evolution ages on ages ago. The fact of the matter is, you cannot have an *eternal* entity that is at the same time an *evolving* entity. The two terms are mutually exclusive; the two entities would be as impenetrable to each other as matter is to matter. The only kind of an eternal entity you can conceive of is one that is *perfect from eternity*. And

the only perfect eternal entity of which you can form a conception is a personal, self-existent, self-determining, omniscient, omnipotent, absolutely holy God—that is, the God of Christian theism.

If an unfolding universe of motion and force—the only kind that the science of the day will admit of—cannot be eternal, it must have had a beginning. It could not have given itself a beginning. Then it must have been created. But it could not have created itself. Therefore, “in the beginning, *God* created the heavens and the earth.”

That there is in the universe an adaptation of means to ends in a remarkable and impressive way, no one can deny. The relative positions of the sun and the planets in the solar system look very like design. Remembering the ends that are subserved by this arrangement, it does not seem that it could have merely happened so. In mathematics we have the rule of permutations. How many chances in millions and billions would there have been for the mere “happening so” of so wise and beneficent a condition of affairs?

Coming down to the earth, man lives upon the ground. Around him and above him is an atmosphere precisely adapted to his physical structure. The air is of precisely the right quality and density, not only for breathing, but also for bearing the clouds at the proper height above man, leaving the intervening space open and clear for his habitation. Considering that matter is made up of atoms and molecules, is it likely that by mere chance they would have fallen upon this admirable and orderly arrangement? Not once in quadrillions of years.

There is a little chance in the world, or what we call chance—just enough, it would seem, to show us what a topsy-turvy world this would be if chance instead of God were its maker and ruler. Suppose that I hold in my hand a hundred dice blocks, num-

bered from one to a hundred. If I were to dash them to the floor, they would be scattered about promiscuously, not in orderly rotation. That is a little taste of chance. How many times would I have to throw them down before they would fall in a straight row and in consecutive order? If I were to live a million years, and would dash them down in a haphazard way once every five minutes, it is not likely that they would once fall in that order. Suppose you should turn your back for a few minutes, and when you wheel about, you should find the one hundred blocks lying on the floor in a straight row and in regular numerical rotation, what would be your first exclamation? That mind was the author of such regularity; that I had intentionally laid them in that order. So you look around you in the world, and you see everywhere evidences of law, order, purpose, adaptation of means to ends, and are you not driven to the conclusion that Mind must be the author of it all?

The only entity in the world that we know anything about that chooses, designs, adapts, arranges in an orderly way is self-determining mind. Hence, when we see the same regimen obtaining in the universe, we can explain it only on the ground that there is back of it all a Mind that planned and executed.

Scientists, whether theistic or atheistic, are fond of telling us that all things are controlled by law; that there are no such occurrences as accidents; that, indeed, the word "accident" should be elided from our lexicons, save as a term to express our ignorance of inexorable law. Perhaps they are right. But if the universe is simply an eternal "happen-so," how could it ever come about that its first and profoundest principle is domination by law?

But, after all, law is an abstract term; it is not an entity or an intelligence in itself—only a method of operation. In the human world a law never exe-



cutes itself. Even if it could write itself on our civil statutes, it would remain a "dead letter" unless it had an executor. Is it not strange that some men look upon a law of nature as if it were at the same time its own maker and its own administrant? In civil affairs it is mind, and mind only, that legislates, judges, and executes. Does not this fact argue for the presence and power of Mind back of all the wise and wonderful laws of the natural and moral universe?

In the world we find man, a self-conscious being, a being endowed with will, conscience, judgment of right and wrong, and certain aspirations and hopes. Surely he is a strange being to be the outcome of blind nature, the evolution of dead *nebulæ*. We state the proposition bluntly: Can consciousness evolve itself out of unconsciousness? If, as some wiseacres contend, the law of evolution is written on every line of the universe, we maintain that the law of involution is inscribed everywhere no less distinctly. So far as can be seen, nothing in nature was ever evolved that had not previously been involved. Now, if self-consciousness in potential or seminal form was involved in the primordial *nebulæ*, it was there eternally or was thus endowed by the Creator. If the former, it should have come to self-consciousness eons on eons of ages before it did. Therefore, it must have been thus endowed in time, and the original *involver* must have been a self-conscious Being—that is, God.

However, is the law of evolution, as held by its more radical advocates, *the* great law of the universe? We very much doubt it, else it would be more distinct and pronounced to-day. The difficulty is the theory of evolution is only a speculation, and, according to our thinking, not a well-substantiated one. It assumes that evolution was the great fundamental law that operated through the ages in bringing the world to its present state. Why, then, did it become practically



a dead letter as soon as history began, when it was possible for man to trace and investigate it? Instead of coming forward with a clear word of testimony to-day, the ablest scientists have not yet found the non-living evolving into the living, nor the unconscious into the conscious, nor, indeed, is there one iota of scientific proof that even one species of animal or plant has ever developed into another. The monkeys of to-day have shown no signs of improvement over their ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. Save in man and under his intelligent training, no progress in nature is to be seen since the era of human history began. Indeed, about the strongest law we now see in unaided nature is the law of the persistency of type. So powerful—one might almost say so obstinate—is this law that, when man's hand is removed for awhile from highly developed and cultured kinds of animals and plants, they persist in reverting to the original inferior forms. It is a pity that nature so stubbornly sets herself to the task of balking the evolutionist—that is, a pity for his theory.

Yet there has been progress in the unfolding of the world. Geological science plainly teaches that. If natural evolution cannot account for it, how is it to be accounted for? In only one way, so far as we can see—God, at such times as suited His wise and beneficent plans, injected into the world the necessary forces and principles, and then enabled them to unfold according to the laws of their own being, “every one after its kind”—persistency of type. Much as this view of special creations has been derided by certain wise ones of the scientific guild, we submit whether it is not the only theory that furnishes an adequate explanation of the appearance on the earth of such a being as man, with his intellect, will, and conscience, his aspirations after high and holy ideals, his longing

for immortal personal existence, and his feeling that he was made in the image of God.

We add a brief statement of the ontological argument for the existence of a Supreme Being: The relative cannot bring itself into being; cannot be self-existent; must be dependent on something else, which we call the absolute. The material universe is relative; it cannot be absolute, because it is a mere mechanism, not being possessed of the power of self-dependence. Therefore, it must be derived. Now there must be the absolute, or there could not be the derived and the relative. Hence we are driven by the exigencies of thought back of the material universe to the absolute entity, which must be the ground and source of His own being and all related being—God.

Thus cosmology, teleology and ontology prove the existence of a Supreme Being, who is the final cause and end of all things—the Absolute One.

In spite of all the efforts of ratiocination, the doubter may have emotional difficulties of which a logical process cannot dispossess him. He may feel that the presence of so much sorrow and the occurrence of so many casualties in the world are not consistent with the idea of a wise and beneficent Creator and Sovereign. In this feeling we have deep sympathy with the doubter. Yet we do not regard the difficulties as insuperable. The panacea lies in the words of Christ: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, and believe in Me."

Faith in the God of the Bible will compose the disquiet of the soul. The present life of sin and sorrow is not, according to the Bible, a permanent state, but only a temporary one—the gateway to a life of unending bliss and power and grace, in which we shall see the use of all the trials that flesh is heir to in this mundane existence. We do not have to live so long in this world of probation that we cannot bear a few

afflictions with patience, when we have so good and sure a prospect of a perfect life hereafter. This view surely has more comfort in it than that of blank atheism, which offers no explanation of the ills of life now, and gives no promise of such explanation hereafter. The best rule of life, after all, is the faith which leads us to rely on the vital and cheering promise of Sacred Writ: "All things work together for good to them that love God."

## II

### THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE \*

EVER and anon an uncertain word is said or written relative to the infallible character of the Sacred Scriptures. Sometimes this doubtful sound comes from an unexpected quarter, and for that reason creates, all the more, a feeling of solicitude. If we do not to-day have a "sure word of prophecy," we are certainly in a most deplorable condition, after all the centuries of proclaiming the gospel and founding churches thereon; then, indeed, we feel like exclaiming, "There is nothing sure and reliable under the sun."

We desire to address ourself to the vital question of Biblical inspiration, not so much in the style of erudition as in a plain, matter-of-fact way, so that the layman as well as the trained and technical scholar can understand. Nor shall we quote a great deal from the theologians on this doctrine, but shall endeavor to elucidate it, as far as may be, in our own way and from our own point of view, our only purpose being to show how we have arrived at intellectual and spiritual composure, in the earnest hope that others may derive some help from the presentation.

It is sometimes said that men undertake to discuss such doctrines as the one under consideration, while they are not versed in philosophy and do not even know how to use philosophical terms correctly.

\* This chapter deals rather with the rationalistic than the purely skeptical condition of mind. However, it is hoped that the skeptic will also find it of value in pointing him to the way of assurance.

Perhaps so! But to make this criticism is at least an assumption of superiority on the part of the critics that is hardly consistent with Christian humility; and thus, while it gives offense, it utterly fails to convince. Sometimes, too, the person who pretends to so much knowledge of philosophy and such refined nicety of discrimination himself, succeeds only in stirring up a cloud of dust when he undertakes to explain his position on profound and vital questions. Moreover, the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures has so many practical aspects that it were a pity if men must have vast erudition in order to have a right to form an opinion regarding it. We believe, therefore, that this doctrine may be so stated, and the arguments so presented, that persons of fair intelligence can at least understand what the writer means, even if every one cannot accept his conclusions.

Is a definition of Biblical inspiration possible? The negative is often maintained. We wonder whether it will be regarded as a piece of presumption should we attempt a definition. We do not hope to explain the mystery of inspiration, any more than we can explain any other mystery, but it does seem to us that a clear and concise statement of the doctrine may be made. Therefore, we would humbly submit the following:

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION IS THE ACT OF GOD BY WHICH HE SO MOVED UPON THE MINDS OF THE WRITERS OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES THAT THEY RECORDED PRECISELY WHAT HE DESIRED TO HAVE RECORDED.

We shall proceed to defend and elaborate this definition. First, it asserts the perfect superintendence of God in the making of the Bible—that is, the complete dominance of the divine or supernatural element, making the Bible a fully-inspired book and one that must be inerrant. Still, it allows ample scope for the human element, which is so obvious in the production



of the Bible. The inspired writers were not mere machines. God made use of them as free agents and rational beings, permitting their various idiosyncrasies proper play, so that no two of them wrote in the same way, but each was master of his own peculiar style; yet in all this free use of the human element, God so moved and controlled and guided the writers that no errors were committed, and that a vast amount of divine revelation was imparted and recorded. Thus the whole Bible is inspired; not merely some parts of it, but all its parts, even to the sentences and words—that is, they are God-breathed; divinely revealed, when necessary; divinely controlled in all cases.

We are well aware that illustrations are not proofs, but they open the windows and help to throw light on one's meaning, and in that way our Lord used them. For this purpose let us make use of an illustration from the school-room. The teacher sends his pupil to the blackboard to solve a difficult problem. The instructor stands behind the pupil and watches and guides the process from beginning to end. But he gives the pupil some liberty; permits him to write the characters in his own way, to carry forward the solution by his own mental efforts as far as he can; meantime the teacher guides, sometimes suggests, at other times imparts needed information; and all the while keeps the pupil from error. We do not offer this parable as a logical demonstration, but simply as an illustration to make clear our idea of God's method of inspiration. When we remember that God is often represented as our Teacher, and that Jesus is often called the Great Teacher, the parable does not seem to be inapt; it seems to be almost a case of "natural law in the spiritual world." All life is a school; all life has a pedagogic purpose.

We hold to the dynamic theory of inspiration, including revelation, suggestion, and superintendence,



but in few, if any, cases pure mechanics. "For the prophecy came not in olden time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were *moved* by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). But what is to be said about the "verbal theory"? We believe in that, too. "*Every* Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16, closest translation). However, in saying that we accept the "verbal" theory, we need to make an explanation. Our idea is not that God dictated every word and punctuation mark, giving the Biblical scribes no election in the style of presentation, but that He so guided and superintended their choice of language that they were kept from error and wrote what He desired recorded. Thus the very words of Scripture were all inspired—that is, God-breathed—though not all of them were necessarily dictated. If it were impossible to express the same thought in different ways, this concession might not be made; but since a thought may be set forth in a variety of phrases, a certain degree of individual liberty might well be granted to the several Biblical writers, thus accounting for the diversity of their style, and making them more than mere writing-machines. Even in the human world an intelligent secretary or stenographer may be so imbued with his employer's spirit and plans as to be able freely and correctly to express the latter's thoughts on some matters of business, without direct dictation in every case. At the same time the secretary would be expressing his own thoughts, and, to some extent, in his own way, would he not? And so long as the employer would look over the document and put his seal and signature to it, it would be considered correct, whether composed by direct dictation, or simply imbued with the spirit and purpose of the employer. In this way we have reason to believe that God employed His amanuenses to compose the Sacred Scriptures, dictating when necessary, simply imbuing

with the idea in other cases. By this view there is ample room for the play of the human element, and yet the inerrancy of the Holy Word is assured.

It is well to distinguish between inspiration and revelation. The former includes the latter, but is a wider, a more generic term. You might say that revelation is one of the parts or species of inspiration. The Bible is all inspired, every line and word of it; all filled with and produced by the breath of God; but not everything in the Bible is supernaturally revealed. Take a concrete case as an example. The history of creation up to the making of a self-conscious man all had to be especially revealed by the Almighty, whether to Moses or the scribes who lived before his day, because there was no man in existence to observe the acts of creation in the prehistoric ages. On the other hand, when Moses wrote down the events of the exodus from Egypt, events that were transpiring before his own eyes, there was no need of a special revelation to inform him of what was occurring. He simply needed to use his own powers of observation. And those powers were all God-given. But note carefully: what he wrote about such events was all inspired of God, who moved upon the historian's mind in such a way as to impel him to chronicle the things that God wanted to have inserted in the sacred record; nothing being inserted that God did not desire there, nothing omitted that He wished to have included.

Such is our view of Biblical inspiration. It is at least a stalwart view, and has given us much comfort and confidence. But can such a theory be maintained on the ground of reason? Perhaps not on the ground of reason pure and simple; yet we believe it can be rationally defended and upheld with more conviction and cogency than any other view. Right here is the place, perhaps, to deny the charge of "constructive rationalism," which is likely to be brought against any-

one who attempts to uphold positive orthodoxy by a process of reasoning. We shall have to deny the imputation. We do not accept the Bible as an infallibly-inspired book because we have first reasoned the matter out and have solved every difficulty. We accept it by faith, and a faith, too, that we have good ground to believe has been implanted by a Power that is higher than mere human ratiocination. Once we did not believe the Bible to be God's Book; now we do, with all our heart, and we repeat that we did not arrive at our present conclusions through a process of human intellection. Before we close this chapter we shall describe the pathway by which the doubter comes to believe the Scriptures to be God's infallible book. The process by which such faith is attained is something very different from the doctrine of inspiration objectively considered.

However, though we are no "constructive rationalist"—how can a man be a rationalist when he bows in full surrender to God's Word, and not to reason?—yet we believe our view to be reasonable, more readily defended than any other, and far less dangerous than the view which gives us an errant and only partially inspired Bible. God's Book does not condemn reason; for it says: "Come now, saith the Lord, and let us reason together"; and St. Peter goes so far as to admonish his readers to be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." No; God does not condemn nor contemn reason; He simply does not want us to place it above revelation.

We can see no fault with Dr. Philippi's statement of the doctrine of inspiration when he says it is "that connection of the human will with the divine Spirit, through which the revelation of the former will be pure and uncorrupt as to the contents of the latter"—that is, if by the word "revelation" he means the en-

tire body of the Scriptures, and not only those matters that had to be supernaturally revealed. However, we regret to have to enter our protest against the following comments on this view by an American Lutheran writer :

"If this view, combined with the closer psychological analysis of the older dogmaticians, be so developed as to include the full value of individual passages like 2 Tim. iii. 16," etc.; "all modified by the actual condition of the Bible, with its various readings and verbal inaccuracies, whose occurrence by divine permission marks their non-essentiality, the limits of verbal inspiration will be fixed. With these determined, the how of inspiration will be clearer, and its theanthropic character better defined, as divine in such a way that the truth of salvation is nowise injured, and human to such a degree in style, conception of individual writers, etc., that the reality of the Bible is not contradicted. The question of errancy will then likewise receive its solution, as essential but not mechanically absolute."

The language of this quotation is not quite lucid, and therefore it is difficult to point out the exact errors of statement. However, there are symptoms of a desire to go too far. When the writer speaks of "the actual condition of the Bible, with its various readings and verbal inaccuracies," he must be referring to the translations we have to-day and not to the original copies of the inspired penmen. But what confusion is this? Does he mean to include the translation and transcription of the Bible in his idea of inspiration? If he does, no wonder he can formulate no definition of the doctrine! He is undertaking an impossible task. Besides, we do not believe that anyone to-day thinks for a moment that the translators and copyists were infallibly inspired, however much he may believe that God superintended their work.



In the last sentence the writer says of "the question of errancy" that it is "essential but not mechanically absolute." We think there must have been a slip of the pen or the type in this sentence; the word "errancy" evidently ought to be "inerrancy." Then the meaning must be this: The inerrancy of the Bible is "essential, but not mechanically absolute." Here is confusion again. Does he mean the translations we have to-day, or the original autographs? In this sentence he seems to mean the latter; in the second sentence preceding, the former. If, however, he means the translations all through, he is trying to make out a difficult problem where there is none, for no one would contend for a moment that the translations are "mechanically absolute"—or, better, absolutely inerrant. Still, we cannot help feeling that he really meant to say that the original documents of sacred Scriptures were not infallibly inspired throughout. In the main, he would say, they, the Scriptures, were all right—that is, so far as regards the "truth of salvation"—but in some other matters they may be faulty. This is the view that must be combated to-day with might and main, if we would preserve the integrity of the sacred volume.

If the original Scriptures were not inerrant, the whole record is rendered untrustworthy; you do not know what to believe and what to reject; the feeling of uncertainty at once becomes so great that you lose your spiritual power and unction, and can no longer look upon any portion of Scripture as the true and absolute Word of God. Then, too, instead of making God's Word the ultimate rule and standard, you must either make reason that standard, in which case you fall into rationalism; or else you must make subjective experience the arbiter, in which case you open the floodgates of false mysticism. Some men may be able to retain faith in an imperfectly inspired Bible, and

in the God and Saviour whom it imperfectly reveals, but most men cannot accomplish this mental and spiritual exploit. And, to our mind, it can be called nothing more nor less than an exploit. Men of practical minds and hard heads will say: "If the Bible is mistaken on one point, it may be mistaken on many others, and therefore we cannot repose absolute confidence in any part of its record." Shall we tell a minister how to deplete his congregation in a single year, and rob it of all faith and spiritual verve? Let him preach that the Bible is a fallible book; that it contains errors now, and always has. On the other hand, let a man of sense and spiritual force preach the gospel in a positive way, as if there were no doubt of its truth, and see how his church will grow! It is a dangerous doctrine—this doctrine of an imperfectly inspired Bible. It depletes, enervates, destroys the faith of the people, as we have seen in more than one instance, and a doctrine that does that surely cannot be true and reasonable.

Suppose there were errors in the original Scriptures, then who is to decide what is true and what is untrue? How is the true to be separated from the untrue? What shall be the norm of judgment, and who shall be the judge? You must accept only that which appeals to reason—rationalism; or that which agrees with your experience—the destruction of the whole Bible history. You and I never experienced that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, or was laid in a manger, or that the angels sang to the shepherds on the first Christmas night, or that Jesus disputed with the doctors in the temple at the age of twelve, and a thousand other events recorded in the gospels! The historical and the spiritual portions of the gospels are so interblended that you cannot take away the one without rending the other into fragments.

It has been said that the doctrine of Christ is pri-



mary; the doctrine of inspiration secondary; and therefore you are to believe in an infallible Christ, but need not believe in an infallible Bible. Do men who speak and write in that way realize that the Christ they exalt is only an ideal Christ, and not the historic Christ? How do we know anything about our Lord? Where do we look for His portrayal as an infallible Saviour and Teacher? In only one book—the Bible. But suppose the Bible is not fully trustworthy! How do you know, after all, that you have an infallible Lord? There are some things in this world that you cannot separate without dire and destructive results. Water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen; separate them, and you no longer have water, but something entirely different. Separate Christ from the gospel that tells us all we know of Him, and you no longer have Christ—you have another kind of a being.

We have also heard it said, "The Bible says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;'" it does not say, "Believe the Bible, and thou shalt be saved!" This is a one-sided and narrowed interpretation of Scripture, and fails to take into account the whole analogy of faith. Jesus also said, "Repent, and believe the gospel." What gospel? The gospel which He was preaching to them. Where have we to-day any record of that gospel save in the New Testament? Paul said that if even an angel from heaven should preach another gospel than the one he had preached, he should be anathema. Where do we learn what Paul's great gospel was, save in his epistles, linked with the records of the evangelists? Where do we find even the command, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," except in the New Testament? Suppose we cannot be sure, after all, that the injunction is correct, is inspired of God, and not merely a human statement, what becomes of our faith? It is founded on the sand. Now that the

inspired penmen are dead, and we can no longer hear their voices, we must have a true and imperishable record of their teachings, or we cannot be certain what their gospel was. If that record is not in the New Testament, we have no such record, and are therefore out upon the sea of incertitude, without a chart or compass.

It has been said that the "spiritual truths," or the "saving truths," of the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant, while other parts of even the original writings may have contained errors! By what right does any man make such a distinction? Is there any warrant for it in God's Word? The trouble is, you cannot separate the saving truths from their historical setting by a sharp line of cleavage. Let us try it and see. The gospel history tells us that Christ healed a man that had a palsied arm. What is the saving truth in that beautiful narrative? Suppose you deny its historical verity, what have you left? The gospel informs us that Christ fed five thousand persons in a miraculous way; that He turned water into wine; that He walked on the water; that He raised the son of a widow from the dead; that He opened the eyes of blind Bartimeus, and so on. What are the saving truths in those narratives? Do you not see that you cannot separate a historical person from his history? The trouble with this partial-inspiration hypothesis is, when you come to apply it to concrete cases, it falls hapless and helpless to the ground. It is not a good working theory; it is not practical. If you discredit part of the gospel history, you discredit the entire record, and then you have no "saving truths" left.

"But what have you to say about the errors of transcription and translation which are to be found in all the Bibles extant at the present day?" someone asks, with not a little concern. We have very little to say about them. They cause most of us little uneasiness.

We cannot help feeling that it is proof of a rationalistic temper to become polemical in attempting to make much of those errors. It seems to arise from a desire to prove that, take it as you will, you cannot have a perfect revelation, an infallible book. We simply admit, as an honest investigator must, that some such errors have occurred in translating and transcribing the sacred records; but we hasten at once to say that they are of such slight significance that not a single essential, vital, or important truth of the Word, historical or spiritual, is affected one way or another by them; nothing important even in the history is invalidated, not one event lost that would add to the strength and power and completeness of the gospel. God has perhaps permitted such slight errors to occur to keep us busy finding out as near as may be what was the original text, to incite us to more diligent research into the deep things of His revelation. How much more the Bible is studied because we must search for the truth, and because we are impelled by the hope of finding it! But you tell men that they cannot find the true Word of God with all their searching, because mistakes were made in the original autographs, and you cut the nerve of all activity in the way of striving for positive results.

Do you wonder why we are ready to admit the presence of errors of copyists, while we will not concede that errors might have occurred in the original autographs? We will tell you why. Because the church has for centuries been aware of the errors of transcription, and yet that knowledge has not destroyed or even weakened her faith in the infallible Word of God; which is positive and *prima facie* proof that her faith can bridge over that slight difficulty. But what has always happened when the original Scriptures themselves have been looked upon as faulty? Let the history of rationalism wherever it has gained foot-

hold tell the doleful story. It has meant an emasculated faith and a depleted spiritual life.

A speaker once exclaimed: "You talk about the original autographs of the Scriptures! I don't know anything about them! I never saw them!" We cannot help wondering whether the speaker ever saw even the Codex Sinaiticus, or Codex Alexandrinus, or the original copies of Shakespeare's plays, or Virgil's or Homer's poems. Such an outburst is not even clever rationalism, for everyone knows that there must have been original autographs, or we could not have had copies of them. Those original documents, fresh from the pens of prophets, evangelists and apostles, were inerrantly inspired by the Holy Spirit, and have come down to us with a fidelity and integrity that point to God as their custodian.

Should it be asked why the canon was ever closed, or was closed when it was, our reply would be: That is God's way. He created the world and all that is in it, then ceased creating, and began developing and unfolding. He created a human couple, then ceased creating human beings, and developed all others from the primitive pair. He sent Christ into the world, who "died once for all," and did not continue to make atonement for sin, but unfolded the spiritual potencies infused into the world by His coming and sacrificial work. So He gave the world an inspired canon, and when it was completed, He closed it and set it forth to be our guide until the next epoch in the earth's history, which will be the millennium. Such are the ways of God, and they are wonderfully wise. A finished creation, a finished atonement, a finished Biblical canon, but a continuous development—that is the divine *modus operandi*. What fault can rightly be found with it?

As a sample of the methods of the negative criticism, we will cite a concrete case. In Matthew's gospel it



is said that *two* blind men were cured by Christ as He was departing from Jericho (Matt. xx. 29-34). The gospel of Mark says that there was only *one* blind man, namely, Bartimeus (Mark x. 46-52). Now, says the critic, the two accounts are irreconcilable, and therefore one or both of the evangelists must have made a mistake. We are far from ready to concede either the premise or the conclusion; but suppose for the moment that Matthew was in error; that he mistook one blind man for two; what will the world think of him as a witness and historian? If Matthew would make a blunder in so simple a matter, mistaking one blind man for two, how can we trust him when he describes weightier events? How do we know that he did not commit many blunders when he described the passion and resurrection of our Lord? That is the way the practical man looks at the matter. The same difficulty occurs if you suppose that Mark mistook two blind men for one. So great a miracle as the healing of the blind was performed; yet here are witnesses who are supposed to be partially inspired, but they are so careless or so inaccurate as not to know how many blind persons had their sight restored!

No! no! we can find a simpler and far less dangerous explanation of these seemingly divergent narratives. It is this: Christ healed many blind men, as we know full well from the gospels. As He was going out of Jericho, He opened the eyes of blind Bartimeus, and Mark records that miracle, to give an example of Christ's wonderful works; perhaps a little later He opened the eyes of two other blind men, and Matthew describes that miracle; thus both narratives are true, and neither evangelist made a mistake. Will someone exclaim against the "harmonists," if we explain the difficulty in that way? Why should he? Surely that explanation is just as reasonable as, and far less dangerous than, to admit that the inspired writers may have made a blunder.

It may be said that there are apparent contradictions in the Bible that cannot be harmonized, try as you will. Perhaps there are; but so many of these difficulties have given way before the efforts of reverent and enlightened scholarship that we have good reason to believe that there is no real contradiction in the few that remain and that additional light will resolve them in good time. For our own part we are glad to acknowledge our indebtedness to the harmonists, who have removed many an intellectual difficulty for us; and, while they have not been able to say the final word—God only can do that—they have helped us not a little to see more and more clearly the “sweet reasonableness of the gospel.”

The negative critics have so often been proved in error that we feel less and less confidence in their decisions as the years go by. Once they declared that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because in his age the art of writing was unknown; now Dr. H. L. Sayce and other Egyptologists inform us that the golden age of Egyptian culture came before Moses, and explorers have discovered writing both in Egypt and Palestine that antedates Moses by many centuries. See the results of excavations in Babylon, Nineveh, and Nippur, by Dr. Hilprecht and others, all of them corroborating the Biblical record not only in its spiritual parts, but also in its historical parts.

Let us go back now to our definition of inspiration. It gives room for the discrimination that, while everything in the Bible is God-breathed, not every assertion in the Bible is true. We hasten to explain. In the second chapter of Genesis the devil makes a declaration, but it is false, and Christ says the devil was a liar from the beginning, and is the father of lies. Now, of course, the devil was not divinely inspired; but the narrator of the story was—so inspired that he set down the devil’s lie correctly, just as God wanted it stated,



to show that the evil one was an impostor. This rule of hermeneutics, that the *writers* of the Biblical books were inspired, but not necessarily all the characters therein portrayed, will help to resolve more than one difficulty.

It is illogical to say that, if all parts of the Bible are equally inspired, all parts must be equally important. God's book of nature helps us to understand His book of revelation, and in many ways there is "natural law in the spiritual world," and the reverse, because God is Creator and Ruler in both spheres. God made both the air and the diamond. Yet no one would say that they are equally important, for the one is absolutely essential to human existence, while the other is only an amenity or ornament. This is not merely an analogy; it is the same law in both realms—the natural and the spiritual.

Sometimes you hear men say that the Bible was not written to teach science. That is true when properly qualified, but it is not sweepingly true. The Bible was not meant to teach science as a scientific text-book, but even the lay mind can see that, wherever the Bible makes statements that belong to the scientific realm, its statements ought to be correct, to agree with what is known to be true in scientific research. For example, the Scripture teaches that God created the heavens and the earth. There, we maintain, it goes boldly into the domain of science, and announces likewise a philosophy of the universe. If it could be proved that the universe was not created, but has existed from eternity, the Bible would be proved to be scientifically erroneous. The converse is also true. Right here we desire to say, parenthetically, that we believe the Bible thus far has been proved to be scientifically correct in every statement, where the Bible is properly understood and the conclusions of science are assured. But this it not the place to attempt a demonstration of this assertion; we

believe, however, that this position can be successfully maintained.

Our Lutheran view of the Word of God as the chief means of grace must forever keep us true to the Sacred Scriptures as infallibly inspired. We do not believe that God's grace comes to us without means, but through the Word, which also gives value and efficacy to the sacraments. In this way we are guarded from false mysticism, and are also kept evangelical. Now, if God's Word is the medium through which grace and truth come to us, must not the medium be a perfect one? If it were faulty, would not the communication likewise be faulty?

It is useless to fling the epithet of "bibliolatry" at those who hold to this stalwart view of plenary inspiration. We may believe the Bible to be a perfect revelation in all its parts, and yet not worship it, just as we might believe the sun shining in the heavens to be a perfect sun, because God made it so, without the remotest thought of falling down to worship the orb of day. No; we do not worship the Bible; we worship the Triune God whom the Bible reveals. This is a distinction that is simple enough for any mind to grasp.

Neither is it correct to assert that the doctrine of plenary inspiration is elevated by its adherents above the doctrine of Christ. We have before us a book on the life of George Washington. It is an excellent book, and sets forth a true biography of the "father of our country." In paying that eulogium to the book, do we mean to say that we regard the book as of more importance than the person it delineates? So we value the Bible as a perfect revelation of the perfect and infinite God who is the sole object of our trust and worship. A perfect book implies a perfect author, but the author goes before and is greater than his book.

The last question to which we shall address ourself

in this chapter is this: How are skeptics to be convinced that the Bible is an inspired book? Is it by a mere process of reasoning? Can the unbeliever be changed into a sincere believer by a mere presentation of the arguments for an inspired Bible? Our reply is in the negative. The doctrine of plenary inspiration is one thing, objectively considered; the method of bringing men to believe that doctrine is quite another. Because some men do not believe does not make the grace of God of none effect; nor does it nullify the fact or doctrine of Biblical inspiration.

We believe that men are often helped to a more favorable attitude toward the Bible by right and cogent reasoning, as they are by kindly treatment and gentle persuasion on the part of Christian people. Hence we would explain as many difficulties for the inquirer as time and ability would allow. But we would never for a moment presume to teach that positive and final assurance either of personal salvation or Bible truth can be wrought by solely human treatment of any kind. God's Spirit must rivet conviction, must seal the truth, upon the mind and heart. The natural heart is not in a condition to receive the truth of God; it must be changed. The Psalmist prayed: "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Otherwise he would be blind to the beauty and truth of God's revelation. It is said of Christ in His relation to His disciples (Luke xxiv. 45): "Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." He also promised to send them the Holy Spirit, who would "lead them into all truth." And Paul says (1 Cor. ii. 14): "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." With all this agree the words of Christ: "Except a man be born again (or from above), he cannot *see* the kingdom of God;"

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

All of these passages show that it is the regenerated and enlightened man who believes, for even faith is the gift of God. Then how may the doubter become a believer? In only one way: "Ask, and ye shall receive;" "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given unto him." So he must go to God and ask for the gift and witness of the Spirit, and when his prayer is answered, he will have assurance of truth, as well as of pardon and salvation. But where does he learn that assurance of truth is to be gained in that way? Where does he learn that the Spirit will come as the sure witness of truth? In the Bible. Therefore the Spirit *operates* through the Word, as well as corroborates and seals the Word. This is not making experience the final test, because the experience is wrought through the Word by the Spirit. Therefore the person who is converted and convinced in this way will always make the Word of God the final and infallible court of appeal. He will be saved from rationalism on the one hand, and from false mysticism on the other. He cannot put subjective experience above the objective Word, simply because he knows that his experience is only a result and a testimony, not an arbiter and a test. He knows that, without the Word as an instrument, and the Holy Spirit as an agent, he never could have won peace and assurance. We contend, therefore, that this view of inspiration saves from rationalism, either constructive or destructive, and from all kinds of false illuminism.

### III

#### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: A RATIONAL DOCTRINE

THE word "Trinity" does not mean merely three; it means three in one. Etymologically it consists of two Latin words, *tres* and *unitas*, "three" and "unity." The idea of the compound word will become clear if we hyphenate it, thus, tri-unity. An analysis of the word, therefore, gives us the idea or doctrine of three in one.

Thus it will be seen that the word itself expresses the whole orthodox doctrine, asserting, first, the unity of God; second, the threefold character of His being. For this reason the word Trinitarian is a much better and broader word than the word Unitarian. The latter narrows your conception to only one phase of the divine life, namely, the unity of the Godhead, and misses the multiple nature of that life; whereas the word Trinitarian includes the conception of both the unity and the diversity of God's being. You can depend upon it that the orthodox conception of Christian doctrine is always better and broader than heretical views, for it comprehends the whole teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and not merely a phase of it.

Is the orthodox view of the doctrine of the Trinity reasonable? It shall be our purpose in this essay to try to prove that it is.

You will observe that the reformers of the sixteenth century planted the confessions of the church on the statements of the old Nicene creed respecting the Holy Trinity. In this they were wise, for they thereby established a historical as well as a doctrinal



connection between the Protestant church and the ancient church, making the two an organic unity. No better or sounder statement of the doctrine of the Trinity was ever formulated than that of the Nicene creed as enlarged and enriched by the Council at Constantinople. What a sturdy warfare the church fathers waged in order to preserve the true doctrine to the church for all the ages to follow! Alexander and Athanasius—they were indeed heroes of the faith, keen of intellect, loyal to the Scriptures, willing to suffer exile, persecution, and even death, rather than deny the faith. Have you ever tried to imagine what would have been the fate of the Christian church had the views of Arius and his sympathizers prevailed instead of those of Athanasius in the epoch-making controversies of the fourth century?

At the Council of Nice the fate of the church seemed to hang on a little Greek letter—iota. The Arians proposed that the word *homoiousios* be used in describing the relation of the Father and the Son in the Godhead; the orthodox party contended for the word *homoöusios*. The difference between the two words was simply the tiny letter *i*, or *iota* in the Greek. The heretics wanted the letter inserted, the orthodox party wanted it omitted. There the battle raged, there the issue hung. Some superficial person may exclaim: "What narrowness! what a disposition to split hairs, to contend over one small letter!"

Do not be too quick to condemn the great men of the past. And, besides, if the Athanasians were bigoted in stickling for the omission of the letter, the Arians were no less bigoted in contending for its insertion. There is such a thing as heretical bigotry as well as orthodox bigotry. The difference between that tiny letter inserted or omitted is the difference between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism; nay, more, it is the difference between the Son of God robbed of His



deity and the Son of God possessed of His deity; and that is the difference between finity and infinity. With the letter left in the word the Arians would have compelled the council to say that the Father and the Son were only of *similar* substance, and therefore the Son might have been simply a creature in the image of God, for even the spirit of man is probably of similar substance with that of the Godhead. But better counsel prevailed, and the letter was omitted, asserting the Father and the Son to be the *same* substance, which view ascribes proper deity to the Son of God. Thus the orthodox doctrine was triumphant, and Christ remained enthroned.

Now look around you and see what a small and feeble folk the Unitarians are, and have been, in fact, all along the history of the Christian church. Compare their lack of evangelistic and missionary enterprise with the strength and activity of the orthodox churches of the world, and you will begin to see what a dire misfortune would have befallen the church and the world had Arianism won the victory in the ancient Councils of Nice and Constantinople. Rob Christ of His deity, and you introduce a fatal weakness into your doctrinal system; and an emasculated doctrinal system will beget an emasculated church, as surely as effect follows cause.

One of the clearest and most discriminating statements of the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the first article of the Augsburg Confession, the creed of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is as follows:

"Our churches with one accord teach that the decree of the Council of Nice, concerning the unity of the divine essence and concerning the three persons, is true, and ought to be confidently believed, viz.: that there is one divine essence, which is called and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and Pre-

server of all things visible and invisible; and yet that there are three persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term person they use in the same sense in which it is employed by ecclesiastical writers on this subject: to signify, not a part or quality of something else, but that which subsists of itself."

This article asserts two things relative to the Godhead—the unity of the divine essence and the subsistence of the three persons; that is, that God is both one and three. That, we take it, is the Biblical doctrine, the one which obtains in the orthodox camp, and we shall proceed to present it.

Right here is the proper place to guard against misapprehension. The word *person* must be carefully defined, or we shall go hopelessly astray, and become involved in a fatal absurdity. We cannot help thinking it unfortunate that the word *person* was introduced into the western version of the creed. It was selected because there was really no better word in the Latin to express the thought of the Nicene creed. The Latin word *persona*, from which we derive our English word *person*, was employed to translate the Greek word *hupostasis*, which was used in the dogmatic statements of the Nicene Trinitarians. The Greek word was an excellent one, because it means a subsistence, a mode of being; and that was precisely what the Nicene fathers meant by asserting that God was triune; they meant that He had a threefold mode of existence or being, while He was one in essence and personality.

Therefore, when we speak of *three* persons in the Godhead, you are not to think of God as composed of three distinct and separate personalities, such as three human individuals are, but that He possesses a threefold life, making the one divine person. This dis-

tion will help us to fend off the charge of absurdity that has often been heaped upon the Trinitarian view. All the ridicule heaped upon the orthodox doctrine has arisen from a misunderstanding or a superficial conception. Had unbelievers studied the orthodox doctrine profoundly, and taken pains to discover what it really is, they never would have laughed the great philosophers of the church to scorn or held them up to popular view as little better than driveling imbeciles.

Let us give an example. Some years ago, when some of us were very young men, a certain noted skeptic was wont to declare that the orthodox theologians of the church did not have sense enough to do the simplest sum in arithmetic. The common school-boy he said, would add three ones together, and would never fail to get three for the result. "One plus one plus one equals three!" he cried. But the theologians did not even know how to do this primary sum in addition, for they would solve the problem thus: "One plus one plus one equals *one*!" Then he would laugh broadly, and the audience would burst into loud applause.

What lack of depth! What shallowness of thought and poverty of investigation! The flouter and his auditors did not even take the trouble to find out what the profound scholars of the church meant by the doctrine of the Trinity. Might they not have taken it for granted that no set of men would proclaim such a preposterous notion as that three ones added together would make only one? It should have been a foregone conclusion that, if honest and scholarly men declared that God was both a unity and a trinity, they must have had some convincing reason for their convictions. Otherwise they would surely have known that they were simply proclaiming their own lack of sanity, and could not hope to see their doctrines accepted.

Had the scoffer looked a little deeper into the statements and arguments of the Nicene Trinitarians and all their followers, he would have discovered that they never for a moment held to the doctrine of a *mathematical* Trinity, but a *spiritual* or *mental* Trinity. And that makes all the difference between sanity and insanity.

More than that, the giber can be floored even by the use of his own method of illustrating. In spite of all his mathematics, we can add three together and get only one for the result. We can even do more than that; we can add five together and make the sum only one. Take the five fingers of the hand (including the thumb); count them one by one, beginning with the small finger and ending with the thumb, thus: one plus one plus one plus one plus one equals (folding them all together) *one*; five fingers, one hand; five in one respect, one in another respect. That illustrates the tri-unity in the Godhead—three in one respect, one in another respect. That is what orthodox thinkers have always meant by the Trinity. They have never supposed, much less advocated, that God is both three and one in the same respect. Nay, He is one in essence, three in subsistence; one in His individuality, three in the modes of His being. The notion of a mechanical, mathematical, or materialistic Trinity has never been held by one intelligent orthodox theologian; therefore, to deride such an absurd doctrine is simply to set up a man of straw for the purpose of demolishing it.

Theologians never would have developed the doctrine of the Trinity had it not been taught in the Holy Scriptures. On the one hand, they learned from their study of the Bible that God is declared to be one God; on the other hand, they discovered no less clearly that the Bible teaches that God is three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The unity of God is taught in many



passages, and the whole teaching of the Bible enforces the doctrine of monotheism. For example, the Scripture says, "I, the Lord thy God, am one God;" "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!" No less easy is it to adduce Scriptural proof that there is a plurality of life in God—that, though He is a unit, He is not a monotone in the constitution of His being. The first name given to the Creator in the Bible is Elohim, which is plural, while the verb is singular, indicating a plurality of existence and a unity of essence.

The Father is so often called God that we need not cite passages to prove His deity. The Son is also depicted as divine. Analyze the first verse of the first chapter of John: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God;" then a few verses afterwards it is said: "And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us," proving beyond a doubt that by the Logos the writer meant Jesus Christ. Have you ever stopped to meditate on that profound verse from St. John's gospel? "In the beginning was the Word"—the eternity of the Son of God, who was already in the beginning, and therefore could Himself have had no beginning. "And the Word was *with* God"—a distinction between the Father and the Son, indicating that in some mysterious respect they are not identical. "And the Word *was* God"—proving that in another respect Father and Son are the same.

The deity of the Holy Spirit is also plainly taught in the Scriptures, for the baptismal formula places Father, Son and Holy Ghost on an equality. The numerous passages in which the Holy Spirit is called God, and in which divine attributes, works, and worship are ascribed to Him, need not be cited here, as any Bible student can connote them for himself. Our purpose is to show that the teachings of the Holy



Scriptures are in harmony with the verdict of reason.

Let us pause here for a moment to consider the significance of the fact that the Bible teaches the trinity of God. Shall we question the sanity of the writers of the Bible, and say that they taught flat contradictions, so that a child could see that their testimony was invalidated? Is the Bible a book of that kind? When you remember its influence on the world, how it has changed the currents of history, and won the homage of many of the wisest and best men of all time, does it seem as if it were an inane and stupid book? We think not. Therefore if a book like the Bible teaches both the oneness and the threeness of God, the strong presumption is that the statements are not made without reason, and are worthy of the most careful and acute consideration. At all events, they are entitled to respectful treatment.

Now, the problem before us is this: Is it possible to explain the doctrine of the Trinity in such a way that it will commend itself to reason? Perhaps we shall see, after due thought, that if there is a God, He must have a trinal character and could not be a bald monad. We will therefore examine what may be called the ontological argument for the Trinity. God is mind, or, as the Scriptures put it, God is a Spirit. The Scriptures also teach that man was made in the image of God. That image must consist in the mental or spiritual nature of man, not in his physical nature, for God is incorporeal. We are not now assuming that the Biblical account of the creation of man in God's image is true, but are simply intent on trying to show that, if it *is* true, it is rational; and if it is found to be rational, it will not be very difficult to believe that it is true.

When we come to analyze the mental constitution of man, we find that certain processes of life are necessary to make him a self-conscious being such as we

know him to be. What are the constitution of mind and the process of thought that are necessary to make a self-conscious being? Let us see whether it does not involve a trinity. To do this we must enter the realm of abstract thought. First, you have a mind; think of that for a moment—a mind. Now go a step further; you can think of your mind—that is, you can make your mind its own object; you can, as it were, set your mind out before you, or, in other words, objectify it. What have you now? You have two—your mind as both subject and object. But you are not yet self-conscious. A third process or act or mode of being is necessary. The subject and object must know each other as one and the same entity. There is such mutual cognition. Now you have a self-conscious being. The circle is complete. Three processes were necessary to bring about self-consciousness, but more are not needed; indeed, if you stop to think about it, every additional step in the process is superfluous.

Now apply this threefold mode of life to God, who is the eternal Mind or Spirit: First, He is; then He objectifies Himself; then He recognizes both subject and object as Himself, one and the same Being. Three modes of subsistence; one entity, one essence, one God. This is not merely an illustration; it is a law of mental being—ontology; we do not see how God could be God in any other way.

But the analogy may be carried further. God posits or objectifies Himself; the object is therefore begotten—the Son begotten of the Father, according to the Scriptures and all the ecumenical creeds. Then the subject cognizes the object as Himself and the object cognizes the subject as Himself. Procession—the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Moreover, both the begetting and the proceeding must be eternal if God is an eternal, self-conscious

and perfect Being. Therefore the statement of the church's confessions that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are co-eternal is correct.

But that is not all. As only one objectification in the life of God is necessary to make Him a self-conscious and perfect Being, we see why the Scriptures call Christ His "only begotten Son." It is also easy to understand that God, making Himself His own object, would love that object, which corroborates the Scripture in which the Father says, "This is my beloved Son." It is evident, too, that the mode of the divine existence in which God makes Himself the object is the proper mode in which He would become incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. In His mode of life as subject He could not do so, for in that mode He is the ground and source of all acts and modes of being, even of the quality of self-consciousness. Here you have the key to Christ's enigmatical saying, "My Father is greater than I," connoted with another assertion which seems to be in direct contradiction, "I and my Father are one." The apparent discrepancy is solved by the ontological argument. As the begetter, the Father is greater than the Son; while as being, essence, entity, the two are one and the same. You see, therefore, why the Nicene theologians, who looked profoundly into the very nature of being itself, would not admit that the Father and Son were merely of *like* substance, but insisted that they were the *same* substance. It had to be *homoöusion*, not *homoiousion*; the iota had to stay out.

The third mode of the divine existence by which the union and identity of subject and object are recognized will explain what Paul means when He says that the Spirit searches the deep things of God; also when He informs us that it is only the Spirit that knows the mind of God. The third hypostasis is the mode or process by which God knows Himself, and

as He must know Himself perfectly, that knowing must be infinitely penetrating—in short, must be the knowing of the deep things of God. Since He is the revealer of God to Himself, it is also logical and consistent that the Spirit should be the inspirer and revealer of superhuman knowledge among men and the guide in the interpretation of God's Word. How appropriate, too, that the Spirit, which completes the act of self-knowing in the life of God, should be the member of the Trinity who bears witness in the hearts of believers that they are the children of God! The same Spirit who causes the Son to know Himself as the Son of the Father is simply carrying out His divine and eternal function when he bears similar testimony in the hearts of believers. The nature of being also demands that He—the Holy Spirit—should be the implanter of the regenerate life in men's hearts. Do you ask why? Because He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and therefore imparts to believers the fullness of the life of God, which would not be true were either the Father or the Son in His own distinct character to perform the office of regeneration.

With this ontological conception in mind it is not difficult to believe the credal statement that "there is one divine essence which is called and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator of all things visible and invisible; and yet there are three persons (hypostases), who are of the same essence and power, and are co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." In this analysis the subject, the object, and the cognizer can all be distinguished, and each performs His peculiar function to complete the circle of being, and yet all are one and the same in essence and personality. There are not three beings; only one. There are three modes, yet each is God in the totality of His being. The three added together make only one.



Keeping this analysis in mind, read over again the first verse of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."\*

The trinal nature of God is real—inner reality. God is not merely an economic Trinity. The Sabelians and Monarchians in the ancient church, like some theologians of the present day, held this idea of the Trinity; that it is not a real distinction in the inner life of God, but merely His method of revealing Himself. They maintained that God, in His real character, is a pure monad, but when He manifested Himself in redemption, He appeared as a triad, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we will but stop to think deeply, this view cannot be entertained for a moment; for if God

\* After the foregoing had been written, we read with much pleasure and profit Dr. Milton Valentine's statement and elaboration of this mode of argument for the purpose of establishing the inner reality of the Divine Trinality. (See his "Christian Theology," Vol I., pages 314-319.) We have also read and carefully weighed his criticism on this process. However, we are constrained to say that the criticism is not convincing to our mind; for in the infinitely complete life of God the process of self-consciousness must be absolutely perfect, so that each of the three hypostases must stand out distinctly—so distinctly, indeed, that we may say that God is unipersonal in one respect and tripersonal in another respect. At all events, in summing up the matter, Dr. Valentine admits the value of the argument, by saying: "The effort of theology, however, in framing this offered explanatory illustration is not to be looked upon as without value. For it exhibits a trinal reality of thought-life which helps us to *approach* the conception of Triune Being. While it does not exhibit an instance of essential tripersonal Being, and thus form a demonstration of its truth, it nevertheless does offer three thought-centers, upon the basis or in view of which 'it does not seem impossible,' as Dr. Clarke well expresses it, that in God there should be, in each of them, the further reality of self-conscious life and action." In granting that much, the author is inclined to believe that the whole argument is conceded.



revealed Himself as a Trinity, but was not so in reality, He gave the world a false view of Himself; He was not what He seemed to be. No; the absolute veracity of God compels us to believe that He affords a true revelation of Himself in every act of history, whether in creation, providence, or redemption.

In the deepest needs of human experience we find strong presumptive evidence that God is tripersonal in His nature. We feel the need of God as a Father; a Father who will love us, care for us, teach us patiently as a father would. So God is clearly revealed in the Scriptures as our Father in heaven, thereby meeting this requirement of the human soul. But we likewise feel that we have sinned against our Father and deserve punishment at His hands; that we cannot save ourselves, or make atonement for our own sins, or render satisfaction to justice for the outrage we have committed against God's holy law. Therefore we feel the need of a Saviour, one who can render satisfaction, who can reconcile us to an offended God, and rescue us from our dire distress. This need of our common humanity is met in the Son of God as our Saviour and Redeemer; and our sin is so great that we feel that only a God, a divine Saviour, can succor us from our lost and desperate condition.

Still, this is not enough. We need a God who is still more than a Father and a Redeemer; we need to get sin rooted out of our natures, where it has become imbedded; we need also to have a new life implanted within us, suppressing the old sinful life and enduing us with moral power to live according to the law of righteousness. Hence we feel our need of God as our regenerator and sanctifier, the very function which the Scripture tells us the Holy Spirit is sent to perform. Do we need more? Nothing whatever. The circle of the trinity of human need is complete, and finds its complement in the triune character of God.

Another argument for the multiple life of the God-head is all but convincing; we refer to the craving of the human mind for diversity, variety. True, we may like to see a straight line, but we find more beauty in a curved line. We scarcely admire an angle; we admire a circle more, and a parabola still more. A level plain may please the eye for awhile, but how quickly you tire of the monotony, and relish the picturesqueness of the hills and mountains! A monotone in reading is intolerable for more than a few seconds. Hence God in nature has given infinite variety, no two trees or leaves or grass-blades alike. Carrying this thought up into the life of God—would you want to think of the divine existence as a dreary monotone, a bald, unrelieved monad? Introduce the conception of a divine Trinity, and what a refreshing rebound the mind at once experiences! God's life is diversified. First, He is a Trinity as the essential constitution of His being, and, besides, He has understanding, susceptibility and will, with all His infinitely glorious attributes, making Him a God whom we can enjoy, worship and study throughout the cycles of eternity. Such a view is inspiring.

Thus we observe that the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is corroborated by reason, experience, and the natural craving of the human soul. There are, therefore, no intellectual obstacles in the way of accepting this profound and precious doctrine.

## IV

### THE BIBLE NARRATIVE OF MAN'S CREATION: IS IT MYTH, ALLEGORY, OR HISTORY?

THE Bible is a realistic book. Its narrative portions carry an air of verisimilitude that—to the writer's mind, at least—is compelling. They read like history and as if they were intended by the writers to be accepted as literal fact. True, there are both allegory and parable in the Bible. Isaiah's parable about the vineyard is plainly a parable; no fairly intelligent reader will mistake it for anything else. The same may be said of the prophet Nathan's beautiful and forcible story of the pet ewe lamb, when he desired to send the arrow of conviction into King David's heart for having stolen Uriah's wife. Read the parables of our Lord, and you have no difficulty in at once distinguishing their parabolic character.

However, when you read the narrative portions of the Old and New Testaments, you feel at once that you have moved into a different atmosphere—not the allegoric or parabolic, but the historical. Let any person who is uninfluenced by theological and scientific prepossessions sit down to peruse the first and second chapters of Genesis, and we feel safe in asserting that he will recognize this patent fact—that he is reading a narrative that was meant by its writers to be accepted as literal history. If it is not history its composers must have purposely deceived their readers. They could not have been ignorant and credulous men, who believed the story merely because it was handed down by tradition; for the record has too much

depth, too much beauty, too much logical harmony, too much agreement with the real facts of nature and human life, to be accredited to a set of gullible and childish compilers.

There are two records of man's creation in the opening chapters of the Bible. The first—that found in Gen i. 26 and 27—is general; the second, found in Gen ii. 7-25, is more specific and detailed. The two accounts are in perfect agreement, giving no evidence, so far as we can discover, of two different original narratives. Their natural harmony will be seen as we proceed with our discussion.

Let us look at the first account of man's creation—Gen. i. 26 and 27: "And Elohim said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea. . . . And Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim created He him; male and female created He them."

That is most significant and impressive language. Is it history, or legend, or allegory? It surely reads like history—at least, as if it were intended for history. When we come to consider the more detailed recital of man's creation in the second chapter of Genesis, we shall endeavor to set forth the unreasonable and tragical consequences of supposing that this narrative is either legendary or allegorical. Just now we are concerned to prove that the story in the first chapter of Genesis tallies with facts as we know them to-day, and is therefore rational history.

Man made in the image of God! What a noble statement! What a thrilling truth, if it is true! If you reflect for a moment, you will note that the more exalted a man's idea is of the nature and design and destiny of man, the more he will be inclined to accept this narrative as a veritable statement of man's origin. On the other hand, the more debased a man's concep-

tions of the human family are, the more he will question and flout the statement that man was made in the image of God. That fact in itself ought to dispose one to accept the more worthy view of man's genesis.

Is proof needed of the assertion that the scoffers at the Biblical view of man's origin are those thinkers who hold low and groveling conceptions of his nature and destiny? We would refer the reader to Haeckel's latest work, "The Riddle of the Universe," in which he speaks of the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, as "the three great buttresses of superstition," which it is the business of science to destroy. (Our quotation is taken from Dr. James Orr's excellent work entitled "God's Image in Man," a volume of signal worth.) Suppose those three great conceptions were taken out of the mind and heart of man, the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality, what would be left in his nature to lift him above the brutes? Is it not a base and groundling view of man? We repeat, and we would make it as emphatic as possible, that the scientific men who entertain such debased views of man are the ones who scout the Genetical account of man's origin; whereas those thinkers who cherish exalted ideas of man's beginning, nature and destiny are ever quite ready to accept the Biblical narrative. Depend upon it, if the modern monistic and materialistic theories were to prevail man would speedily be robbed of the divine image, de-humanized and brutalized. It is not only a degrading view of man; it is a fatally one-sided and defective philosophy, simply because it does not take into account the most exalted and worthy facts relative to man's constitution. Another quotation from Haeckel will plainly show why he did not accept the Bible doctrine of man's creation in the divine image: "Sufficient for us, as an incontestable historical fact, is the important thesis that man descends immediately from the ape,



and secondly from a long series of lower vertebrates." No wonder! No wonder! This view of the human family is surely "of the earth, earthy." There is nothing heavenly and uplifting about it. How, then, did man ever come to have the heavenly and ennobling thoughts that pulsate within him? Do such conceptions spring up out of the ground?

On the other hand, looking at man as he is to-day in his best moral frame, we find that he has exalted conceptions of God, worships Him, holds most happy and intimate communion with Him—or, at least, he thinks he does. He regards the Almighty as a personal, loving and righteous Being, infinite in all His attributes. Now, if man came up by a process of natural evolution, how did he come to have such profound and exalted views of God? If there is no God who made man in His own image, we have here a case of water rising higher than its source—mere material substance evolving a high spiritual conception. You cannot account for man's mental and spiritual conceptions by mere material evolution. However, suppose for a moment, for the sake of argument, that the Bible record is true—that man really was made in the image of God—how easy it is to account for his initial conception of God, his confidence in Him, his love for Him, his fellowship with Him! In short, the present spiritual status of man is simply a logical outcome, if the Biblical representation is true. Therefore the Bible story agrees with the facts about man as we know him to-day, and that is a powerful, if not an entirely convincing, argument that the Biblical record is as true as it is rational.

An analysis of the Biblical idea of the divine image in man will add cumulative force to the reasoning. In what does the divine image consist? First, we find that man is a mental being as well as a physical. In his very consciousness he feels that he is mental. Con-

scious of distinctly mental acts, he does not believe that he is merely a highly developed physical organism. If he is, that organism has told him a lie, and has continued to tell it since the first dawn of conscious human intelligence. If material organization—and that in its highest development—bears so equivocal and false a testimony as to make a man think he has a mind or soul when he has not, then its testimony is worse than worthless and we can find no basis of fact in all the world. Material evolution is a poor philosophy; it rests on slender proof and does not account for many of the most patent facts of the world, of human life and experience. It is not a good working hypothesis.

On the other hand, suppose that the Bible doctrine is true, that God is a Spirit and man is a spirit too, the latter a finite copy of the former, who is infinite; do you not see, then, how easy it is to account for the fact that man's consciousness tells him that he is a mind or spirit? You have in that view an adequate cause to account for the known effect. And this leads us to say that, in our view, the divine image in man consists, first of all, in the fact that in his mental constitution he is composed of similar essence with his Creator. This could not be said of the material creation up to the time when man was given his being. Of no object, mineral, vegetable, or animal, was it said that it was made in the image of God; but now, when God is going to make a different order of being, He gives him a mental or spiritual nature of the same kind of essence as Himself. Therefore it might be said, without irreverence, that man is God finite, and that God is man infinite. While in his spiritual constitution man is not of the *same* substance as God—not *homoöusion*, as the Logos is; yet he is of similar substance—*homoiousion*—that is, man is spiritual substance like His Creator. Therefore fellowship of the

most real and intimate kind can subsist between God and man. Such fellowship does exist to-day; therefore, again, the Biblical portrayal is a rational account of man's origin.

Coming to the psychological constitution of man, we find the same rhythm between the facts and the Bible story. Man is a psychical trinity, his mental being composed of intellect, susceptibility and will. And these are not divisions of his mind, as if it were a material substance and could be separated into parts; but his whole mind is intellect, his whole mind susceptibility, his whole mind will, these different powers being in reality the threefold constitution and life of man's mental being. Now you cannot form any other conception of God, if you believe in His personal existence at all, than that He, too, is a triune Being of the same kind, only infinite in His perfections. When you look at the universe, and note its wonderful character, its wise adaptation of means to ends, you again attain to the conception that its Creator, if it was created, must have the same mental constitution—intellect, susceptibility, and will. Here again we have the present-day fact that God and man are living in close and happy relationship accounted for, if we accept the Bible story as veracious.

Going farther into ontology, in the very constitution of man as a self-conscious personality we find evidences of a trinity of life and being and a unity of substance. Revert again to the Biblical narration: "And Elohim said, Let *us* make man in *our* image." Why "us" and "our"? To say that God invited the angels to assist in the creation of man, and then made him Himself without angelic aid, as the Genetical recital says He did, would be absurd. To say that God here suddenly began to use the magisterial or editorial plural is to make the story so formal and mechanical as to rob it of all life. Then why did He use the first per-

son plural? The name of God is itself plural in the original—Elohim. This does not mean that there are many gods, but it does point to the fact that God has a variety of life, of subsistence, that He is not a mere monad. We might say that God's being and life are not a monotone, but that there is diversity in His life; that it is triune in its very constitution.

Now, if we study profoundly the nature of man as a self-conscious being, we discover that a threefold process of life is necessary to complete the circuit of his self-consciousness. First, there is the mind itself; now you can think of your mind, make it its own object, set it out, as it were, before you. However, you know that the subject and the object are the same, the same entity, the same substance. Here, then, we have two hypostases—subject and object, yet both identical. A third process is necessary, and this process, like the others, is in the very constitution of the mind as an entity; the subject must cognize the object as its very self, and likewise the object must so cognize the subject; yet the cognizer is also the same mind, the same substance, as the subject and object. Now the circle of self-consciousness is complete. No further process and mode of inner life are required. In every self-conscious being there must be this trinity of subsistence and unity of substance.

All we need to do now, since man has been made in the image of God, is to apply the foregoing analysis to the Divine Being, and we will see that such a Being, too, must be a trinity, only infinite and eternal. God's life must also be triune—subject, object, and the union of the two, each a distinct mode of life, yet the same being and essence. Not three Gods or beings, but three modes of life, each including the whole divine personality and substance. We may even go further: God must be the *eternally* self-conscious Being. Therefore this triune life must be eternal.



More than that, the subject *begets* the object, and is its source; the Son is therefore eternally begotten of the Father. Again, in the process of mutual recognition there is procession from each to each; the Spirit therefore proceeds eternally from the Father and Son. We do not think this a mere analogy; we think it a law of self-conscious life in both the finite and the infinite realms. At all events, if we grant that this profound law obtains in both man's and God's very being, we readily see how it comes about that God and man are conscious of each other and sustain holy and actual relations. Otherwise the kinship between God and man becomes an inexplicable riddle. Therefore the Bible account of man's creation is not only the only clear and rational one we have, but if it is not true, the "Riddle of the Universe" remains a riddle that is not, and never *can* be, unraveled.\*

There is another touch of realism in the general account of man's creation; he was given dominion over the animal kingdom. That is true to-day. While, on account of sin and imperfection, this regal position is not perfectly realized, yet the proof is clear enough for the most skeptical that man is a sovereign being in the world that he inhabits; and the more he realizes the image of God, the more pronounced his dominion becomes.

Our next effort will be to show the realism and historicity of the more minute account of man's creation in Gen. ii. 7: "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Well are we aware that this story has been made the

\* The foregoing metaphysical statement of the triune nature of God and man, is given in somewhat more fully elaborated form in the chapter on "The Doctrine of the Trinity," but it is permitted to stand here, to make the argument of the present chapter as much of a unity as possible.



subject of not a little ridicule on the part of skeptics. Some of them have denounced it as utterly absurd and childish—too much so, indeed, to be accepted by the intelligence of the present day. We shall have to look into the matter, and get a little beneath the surface to see whether this is so preposterous a narrative as some would-be wiseacres would have us suppose. In the first place, if man was not created in this way, how was he brought into being? To denounce this venerable story as untrue, and propose nothing rational in its stead, is surely not a very wise, considerate or profound method of procedure. We contend that, if man was not made in the Bible way, we know absolutely nothing about his origin; it is all wrapped in mystery, all shrouded in darkness. What is the logical consequence? If we do not know whence man came, neither do we know whither he is going; if we know nothing of his origin, we surely can know nothing of his destiny. Nor do we know aught of the purpose of his being in the world. Worse than that, there is no hope of our ever knowing. Generations will come and go, each living a self-conscious life for a few years, suffering, believing, hoping, then perish and go out into eternal oblivion, never to know whence or why or whither! Can anyone believe that the universe, so wisely and wonderfully made, so filled with evidence of design, is such an eternally meaningless riddle as that? To our mind, that is a preposterous belief of the most preposterous kind. It is absurdity heaped infinitely high and stretched out infinitely long. The human mind recoils from accepting conclusions that are so unsatisfying.

Now turn the picture for a moment, and look at the bright Biblical side of it: Suppose that man's genesis came about as the Bible depicts, what a noble and exalted origin he had, coming directly from the creative

hand of God! Then go farther and accept the rest of the Bible history of man and the scheme of redemption through Jesus Christ, and all is as clear and beautiful as the noonday sun; then we know whence man came, why he is in the world, and whither he is going after physical dissolution takes place. Then the *raison d'être* of man's existence, yea, of the existence of the universe itself, is justified and clear. Then life has a meaning—yes, more, it has a resplendent and enchanting meaning. Which alternative will the thinker accept?

An examination of the Biblical narrative of primitive man's making will indicate its rational character and prove its agreement with the facts of human life as we know them to-day. Indeed, we shall see that it is a very realistic story. While it has its origin in the skies, it keeps its feet upon the ground—this credible and sane recital of Holy Writ. According to the Scriptures God made man's body out of the ground and then breathed into him a soul; that is, He made him a dual being. And we find man to be just such a being to-day, having a physical organism united with a mental or spiritual nature. He knows that he is not all body nor all soul, but the two joined in one personality. Moreover, he realizes that this union is vital, organic; that the soul—for the time, at least—is dependent on the body to a great extent, and that the body is no less dependent on the soul. Without either he would not be man as we know him to-day. How realistic, therefore, is the Bible story! How closely it cleaves to the facts of human life! If the Biblical representation of man's origin is true, we have a most lucid and beautiful way of accounting for the fact that he is a dual being. Otherwise we cannot account for these facts. For this reason all erroneous philosophies are narrow and one-sided; that of the materialist and evolutionist in that he makes

man all physical; that of the idealist in that he makes him all psychical; whereas the Bible gives the full-orbed and all-sided view of man as a dual being, composed of body and soul, such as he is to-day known to be.

With what a firm, realistic hand the Biblical writer tells the absorbing story of man's primeval making! God formed man's body out of the "dust of the ground." As Dr. Keil declares, in his invaluable commentary, the original word for "dust" here means the finest material of the soil of Eden, not common dust such as is trampled in the street. This is one of the most realistic touches that could have been given; for when the scientist analyzes a human body in his laboratory, he makes the discovery that it is composed of precisely the same chemical constituents as the ground. We have more than once seen this demonstrated by men who were thorough masters of the sciences of physics and chemistry. However, we need not be learned chemists to see how true it is, for when death comes, the human body molds back to the dust from which it sprang. Therefore, when the Bible says that man's body was made of the material of the ground, it hews along the line of actualities; it is true to scientifically established facts and to the facts of every-day observation.

"And man became a living soul." We have already dwelt at sufficient length on the fact that man has a mental nature, or a soul as well as a body, and here again the narrative agrees with the facts as we know them to-day.

Many students of biology, zoölogy and anthropology make much of the fact that there exists a close resemblance between man's body and the bodies of animals, and they think it must be accounted for by the theory of the evolution of man from the lower animal kingdom. We have neither the time nor the dis-

position just now to prove, what we think can be proved, that evolution will not explain near all the facts in the case, and that it is not founded on a sufficiently complete induction of natural facts; but we will stop to say that this similitude between men and animals can be accounted for very readily from the Biblical history; for God made the animals, and gave them a vital relation with the real world in which they were to live; then when He made man to have the same organic relation to the soil and its products, and also a vital relation with the lower animal kingdom, He was simply carrying out the unity of His plan when He gave man a body very similar to that of the animals, yet with enough distinction to mark him off as a being of a higher order.

Man, having been created as he was, was placed by his Maker in the midst of an environment—a beautiful garden with trees bearing various kinds of fruit. Note the correspondence to facts again: Wherever man goes to-day, and especially wherever he carries Christian civilization, he converts the earth into a garden. Is that because in his very nature he harks back to the original Eden in which he was created?

We wish to state our theological view directly and positively at this point: We believe that the environment of the first man was a *real* environment; it was a *real* garden, with *real* soil, *real* grass, *real* fruit-trees, *real* animals, with a *real* sky overhead. This Edenic story is not an allegory. To-day man is in the midst of a real environment, not an allegorical one; he walks on real soil, not allegorical; he eats real fruit, drinks real water, breathes real air, not allegorical or legendary. Since man is now a real being in the midst of a real environment, and has been so in all his history, his original condition must also have been real. You cannot extract an actual man out of mythical or parabolic antecedents and conditions. Our first parents must



have subsisted on real food just as their descendants do to-day.

Adam was also instructed to dress the garden. To-day men must cultivate the soil and the fruit-bearing trees. Just one word here about the tree of forbidden fruit, though we shall deal with that in the next chapter: There is forbidden fruit in nature to-day, fruit that cannot be eaten with impunity; therefore the prohibition in the garden of Eden is not one that is out of harmony with the status of the world of nature as known at the present time. And if the Creator has not instituted these prohibitions, then what was their origin and what is their purpose? The fact of the matter is, the theories of atheism, materialism, naturalistic evolution, and agnosticism, do not reply satisfactorily to a single profound inquiry of the human soul. They are narrow and superficial; they may seem to account for a few facts, and those the lowest and most materialistic and least important; but they do not account for the vast majority of the facts, especially the highest and most vital ones.

The Biblical story of the creation of woman keeps close to realities as we are cognizant of them at the present time. We know it has often been made the object of derision, this "rib story," as it is sometimes facetiously called; but there is no occasion whatever to laugh it out of court. The first man was put into a deep sleep, then a portion was taken from his side, and from it God "builded a woman, and brought her unto the man." Again we ask of the critics of this story, if woman did not get her origin in this way, how *did* woman originate? Can you account for her beginning? Twist and mold and squeeze your theory of evolution all you will, you cannot get the origin of sex out of it, for in all organic realms you must first have both the male and the female before you can have reproduction. Therefore male and fe-



male must have come into existence by creation, not by evolution. The old and somewhat childish question, "Which came first, the hen or the egg?" is perhaps not so puerile, after all, when it is analyzed; for if the hen was first, how did she come into existence without an egg, and how could she lay fertile eggs that would develop into chicks? If the egg was first, how was it produced, how could it be hatched without a brooding hen, and how could the chick survive without a mother hen to take care of it? Observe that you cannot even account for the origin of the ordinary fowl by the process of natural evolution. However, the Bible way of accounting for such things is at least adequate—that God created both a hen and a cock to begin with, and then the whole process of subsequent procreation and development came about according to well-known scientific facts, facts of induction. So, granted that in the beginning God created man and woman as the Bible recites, you have no difficulty in giving a rational and scientific account of the entire human family to the present moment.

It may be asked why God proceeded in the way He did to make woman: why did He make her from a portion of man? Why, having made the man from one parcel of ground, did He not make the woman from another? The answer is, that would have given the human race two origins instead of one; it would have precluded the solidarity of the human family. The Bible method just as it is recorded is better, more rational, because it preserves the great scientific truth of the unity of the human race, and adequately accounts for the consciousness in both sexes that they are one flesh and one blood, organically one, and that mentally they are of the same order and constitution. How beautifully, one might say, romantically, the story proceeds, when it says that Adam, on seeing the woman before him, exclaimed: "This is now bone

of my bone and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." (Hebrew, *Ish*, man; *Isshah*, woman.) And that is precisely the experience to-day in the relation of the sexes in every case of true marriage, real physical and mental affinity. And, further, to-day we know of no method of procreation save by the process of taking a part of the parent as the nucleus or germ; and the taking is real, not allegorical, corresponding again with the realism of the Bible story. It is significant, too, that God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam before He made the incision into his side; for to-day physicians almost always administer an anæsthetic when a surgical operation is to be performed.

Lastly, the place from which a part of the man was taken with which to make the woman is not without significance, and will account for certain facts as we recognize them at the present time. She was taken from the side of man—which tallies with the fact that woman is man's companion and helpmeet, made to stand by his side. As old Matthew Henry naïvely and truly puts it, woman was taken from man's side; not from his head, that she might *top* him; not from his feet to be trampled down by him; but from his side that she might be near his heart, his loving companion and equal. That is the true woman's relation to her husband to-day. Who will say it has not come down to us in real historical succession and inheritance from the creation of the first human pair in the garden of Eden?

## V

### THE FIRST TEMPTATION: IS THE BIBLICAL STORY FACT OR FICTION?

MANY modern Biblical critics, especially of the negative sort, are wont to call the story of the garden of Eden an allegory. Just how they would apply the various parts of the story to actual life, it would be difficult to say. So far as regards the first temptation, however, they would explain that the tree of forbidden fruit represents the sinful appeal of the world to the human mind, the seduction and yielding being entirely psychical and subjective. The tree itself, the critics declare, had no objective reality, and as for the idea of a literal serpent, that is almost too childish to be thought of for a moment!

We wish to bring this strategic event to the test of reason and experience. Whatever else may be said of the Biblical story, it does not read as if the writer meant it for fiction; rather, it reads as if it were meant to be veritable history. As a rule, a production that is meant to be a fable, parable, or allegory, has stamped upon it some of the hall-marks of a production of that kind; but in the Genetical account there is not a word or a syllable to indicate that the writer intended to compose a bit of fiction for a didactic purpose. For that reason it would seem that he intended his narrative to be believed as history. Now, if he knew it was not history, he must have purposely deceived his readers; if he thought it was history, and it was not, he was himself deluded, and his production is worthless even as an allegory. That would give to

the Bible a puerile beginning. How such a book ever could have won so large a place in the heart and faith of the world, it is impossible to conceive.

Suppose we look somewhat minutely at the Bible account of the seduction of our first parents, to see whether it bears the sign manual of reality or of allegory.

In the first place, man as we find him to-day, is a dual being, composed of body and mind. He lives in the midst of a physical environment with which he has a most vital relation by means of his physical organism; and he has also been endued with a higher nature, a mental or spiritual, with which he holds commerce with other mental beings. Such is human life at the present time; such it is known to have been throughout all credible history.

Go back now, and read the story of man's creation and life in the Edenic garden. You will find it taught there explicitly that he was originally given a body and a soul. With the former he was vitally connected with a physical environment; with the latter no less vitally related to the psychical realm. Does not this tally with man's constitution as we find it to-day? At present he is surrounded by and related to a real physical cosmos, not a chimerical one. He also has real mental experiences and enjoys real mental intercourse with other intellectual beings. Therefore the account of man's genesis in the second chapter of the Bible seems to be natural and realistic. If there was a real garden, with real material objects, such as earth, grass, trees, fruit, and animals, what a fine air of verisimilitude the Biblical narrative carries with it, and what a realistically graphic account it gives of the origin of the human family! Call the story only an allegory, bodying forth nothing but subjective experiences, and you see clearly that it is not true to all the facts of human life as we know it to-day; and, worst of all,

the origin of man is left in obscurity, as is also the genesis of evil in the world.

The second chapter of Genesis states that there were many fruit-trees in the garden of Eden, and that man was directed to eat of their fruit. Man subsists largely on fruit to-day; and it is not mythical fruit. Therefore, unless his nature has greatly changed, real fruit must have been a large part of his food in the beginning of his terrestrial life. He lives on a real earth to-day, too, not an allegorical one. Does not this agree with the Biblical representation? If our first parents were real beings, they must have lived in a real garden—that is, a place where real fruit grew for their subsistence.

However, in the Genetical story we read of one tree of which our first parents were forbidden to partake—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Here is the strategic point with the skeptical critics, the *crux* over which their faith goes to pieces. They stoutly contend that this tree could not have been a real tree; that it stands for a purely psychical temptation.

That there is something symbolical about this tree no one can deny. It is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and therefore must represent the experience of holiness and sin in the nature of man. The fruit itself could not have imparted to our first parents the knowledge of good and evil, which could have come to them only through growing wisdom in a normal and righteous way, or through an act of disobedience, introducing an element of discord into their being, which theretofore had flowed on with perfect rhythm, in perfect accord with God's will, their own constitution, and all their environments. So, then, there is a point where symbolism does play a part in the program of temptation and sin.

But it must not be supposed that this concession



makes the story itself an allegory. In God's dealings with man He often uses natural objects to illustrate spiritual truths. The burning bush is an instance; so are many of the parables of our Lord. Because the fowls of the air are chosen in Christ's parable to represent God's loving care for His creatures does not encourage us to question their reality.

Suppose for a moment that there was an actual tree of forbidden fruit; then when our first parents partook of it, would not the very act of transgression at once have given them the knowledge, or experience, of evil as distinguished from good? Indeed, would it not have impinged itself all the more forcibly upon their consciousness because the inward act of disobedience was accompanied by an overt act, both the body and the mind having a share in it?

Let us go with "the mother of us all" in her temptation. She was an actual woman of flesh and blood and mental constitution—very human, indeed, like ourselves, save that she was as yet without sin. For the present we will pass by her tempter, as we are now dealing mainly with the tree of forbidden fruit. After a brief conversation with the enticer, the story runs thus (Gen. iii. 6): "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food—" We must stop to analyze that first clause. She saw that the tree was good for food. Interpreted as allegory, how vague the application of the narrative! Who was the tempter? What was the fruit? What psychical experience is represented by the woman's seeing that the fruit was desirable for food? All is vague and pointless. Interpreted as history, however, the story is in perfect agreement with what we know to-day of human nature. "Good for food!" She was tempted on the physical side of her nature, just as people are to-day allured by material objects that hold out the promise of bodily enjoyment.

How fine is the realism of the story! Mother Eve was not the last of her race who has stolen forbidden fruit even in the most literal sense of the term. No, indeed! The man or woman or child who yields to the temptation to creep into his neighbor's orchard or garden for purposes of theft simply proves himself to be a lineal descendant of the mother of the race. Nor do we mean this statement to be taken jocosely. The desire for fruit stealing is woven into the very warp and woof of human nature to-day. In its most literal sense, therefore, this narrative adheres closely to the facts of human experience.

However, the wider application of the story is that men and women to-day are tempted on the physical side of their nature, often becoming the most wretched victims of passion, appetite, and lust. Indeed if we assume that our first parents yielded to a physical seduction, as well as a psychical, and thereby corrupted and disorganized to some extent their bodily organism, we have an explanation of the awful sensuousness that has ever since been the shame and bane of the human race. We have never been able to understand why, in view of the gross carnality of mankind, any critic should insist on making the original temptation wholly psychical.

Going a little further on in the verse we find another masterly touch of realism: The woman also saw that the tree was "pleasant to the eyes." Here we are brought face to face with the intimate relation existing between the bodily and mental natures in man. Bodily eyes to see the beautiful fruit upon the tree, a mind to appreciate the attraction—how natural! how realistic! It agrees perfectly with the actual constitution of men to-day. How often are men tempted on the physical and psychical sides of their nature combined! Often it is difficult to determine to which part of their being the stronger appeal is made.

Moreover, how many persons have been lured to their ruin by outward beauty—of fruit, of art, of the human personality! In the vegetable world some of the most poisonous berries and fruits are the most attractive to the eye. In the human world sometimes the most loathsome characters appear in the most seductive guise. The touch of the inspired penman was true and graphic when he wrote that the tree was “pleasant to the eyes.”

A superficial writer of fiction might have stopped here and left the story incomplete in its human quality. Not so the genius who wrote this profound story of Genesis. He had previously said that man in the creation was dowered with a soul or mind; now he must be consistent with himself, he must keep the story properly sustained if he would have his readers believe that he is recording actual history. So he adds another realistic touch—the woman saw that the forbidden tree was “a tree to be desired to make one wise.” A purely psychical temptation there! Wisdom has nothing materialistic about it; it belongs solely to the domain of the spirit. The congruity of the story is, therefore, sustained; it reads like a paragraph from modern history, for to-day we see people yielding to the enticements of ambition and moral pride, just as Eve did when she wanted to take a short cut to wisdom.

Now the whole gamut of possible human temptation had been run, and the writer stopped, just as a true historian should have done. There are no other kinds of blandishments to which human nature is subject save these three—the purely sensuous, the purely psychical, and the union of the two. Had the writer added another he would have fallen into error; his history would have lacked scientific accuracy and would have foisted something extraneous upon human nature.

A question that might be asked is this: Was the forbidden fruit itself injurious? We do not see why it may not have been. To-day nature produces noxious fruits and cereals, some of them merely unwholesome, others positively poisonous. In some way, too, the seeds of disease and death dwell in the physical constitution of man. We would suggest this inquiry as a subject worthy of thought: Might not the forbidden fruit have introduced the beginning of disorganization into the human body? At least, we see nothing unreasonable in the supposition, though it is not necessary in order to prove the realism of the story, because if sin first entered into the soul only, it still would have disturbed the harmony of man's entire being, including the physical as well as the psychological, and this on account of the vital relation existing between the two parts of his nature.

Why did the Almighty place the tree of forbidden fruit in the garden? That is the question that puzzles and distresses more people than almost any other connected with the Bible. It is a problem that is not easy to solve. Still, we believe that an analysis will prove that it will stand the test of the rational process. Here again we find the story in agreement with what we know of human nature. Man has a consciousness of freedom, of a "will in liberty." He does not feel that he is the football of fate or the puppet of circumstances, but that in many respects he is a free moral agent. He is not only intuitively conscious of such a gift or endowment, but the very fact that he feels remorse of conscience when he does wrong proves, beyond a reasonable doubt, that he is a moral being and not merely an automaton. It is only dialectical sophistry that calls in question any of the facts of the universal consciousness. You cannot prove fundamental truths; you simply know them by intuition.

Now, when we come to analyze the qualities of free moral agency, we find that it involves the power of choice. Suppose there had been no prohibition in the garden, what would have become of our first parents' free moral agency? Had they been created with such an endowment, they would have had no opportunity to exercise it, and that would have virtually made them slaves to the will of God. The same would have been true if God had created them without the power of choice. In either case they would have been different beings from men as we know them to-day, and therefore could not have been the progenitors of the human race. To have created man sinful would have made God the author of sin—a thought that is intolerable. And it is just as irrational. According to the Bible God is so far from being the author of sin that He is represented as being exceedingly grieved and angry because sin came into the world. The Bible would be a book that was silly to the point of imbecility had it made God the author of sin and then portrayed Him as angry at our first parents for their disobedience. Judging from the Bible's influence on the civilization of the world, it is not so puerile a book as that. Somehow it must commend itself to the rational judgment of a large part of the human family, and the most intelligent and advanced part at that.

Besides, to have created man sinful would have partly destroyed his free agency, because it would have given him a bias toward evil. As he was created, he was made with a perfect balance of will power, so that he could, without coercion from either side, choose obedience or disobedience. That is the reason God did not come to man's rescue and prevent his seduction. He would not interfere with man's exercise of his greatest prerogative, the power of free choice. Had God interfered, He would have com-



pelled man to be obedient and man would have been a sinner in his heart, after all; or if not that, he would have been merely an obedient machine or animal.

But must man be made a free being at all hazards? Why did not God create him a good and happy being without the dangerous prerogative of free moral agency? These are questions that are often asked by the thoughtful and the skeptical. We would reply as kindly as possible that persons who offer the foregoing objection prove by their inquiries that they do not have as high a conception of ethical qualities as they should have. They seem to think that a *happy* being is rather to be chosen than a *moral* being. God had already made such happy but unmoral beings—the lower animals that existed before man. They were happy and good in their way—but they were only animals, not men, not moral and free intelligences. If a creature is to be created who is higher in the scale of being than the members of the animal creation, that creature must be endowed with the power of free choice.

Evidently God had higher conceptions than the epicurean philosopher. God preferred a moral being to a happy animal or machine. Ethical quality is the highest quality in the universe, and the power of choice—in other words, free moral agency—is the very essence of ethical quality. Without it there could be no such thing as the ethical. More than that, the power of free will is the noblest attribute of any being, whether human, angelic or divine. God is only God because He is ethically good and ethically free. Man is man only because he is a free being. God takes pleasure in His natural creation; He takes more pleasure in the free, uncoerced service of beings made in His own image. We scarcely hope to make the debauched sensualist see this, because he cares not for moral excellence; he is steeped in mere material en-

joyment. However, the argument will be effective with those who have attained to the sphere of moral freedom and spiritual appreciation.

We must say a word as to the rôle played by the serpent in this drama of the fall of man. To-day we find that nature often comes to men in the guise of a tempter. This fact is so patent to every thinker that we need neither elaborate nor illustrate it. How else could this evil principle have come into nature save by the intrusion of some evil spirit from without into her sphere? Surely God would not have created the natural world with the evil principle in it. Then how did natural evil come about? We think the most probable and rational explanation is that an evil spirit entered into nature, assuming one of her myriad forms, and thereby contaminated the entire realm, and would have destroyed it had not God stretched forth His staying hand, and said: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." If that does not explain the genesis and the presence of evil and misfortune in the natural world, there is no explanation. We might as well confess ourselves agnostics at once. If it should be asked why God permitted evil to come into the sphere of nature, our only reply is—for purposes of human discipline and development. God would rather see His rational creatures strong and brave than selfishly and supinely happy, knowing that in the end they would attain the greater felicity.

The evil spirit's adroitness was exhibited by his entering into the serpent, which the Bible characterizes as "more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made" (Gen. iii. 1). That again is in accord with the sly, deceptive approaches of evil as we know it at the present time, proving the Bible to be a realistic as well as a divine book.

One more question is certainly worthy of reply: Why was Satan the tempter? It was well it was so;

for thus the enticement came to man from without; it did not have its initiative from within the sphere of his own being. That in a measure mitigates man's sin, and leaves him redeemable, though a fallen creature. The fact that Satan took upon himself the guise of the serpent also extenuates man's transgression, for man was thereby deceived, enticed into the act of disobedience. This will be made clear by supposing that our first parents had eaten of the forbidden fruit without a tempter and without deception. How much more aggravated their offense would then have been! Then their sin would have been so heinous, coming from the very depths of their own being, that they would scarcely have been salvable, and therefore a Saviour would perhaps never have been provided. So far as we can understand the teaching of the divine Word, the angels who fell cannot be redeemed. May it not be so because their temptation came from within, through no outward allurements and deception? That, at least, is a phase of the subject that is worth pondering.

This will be the time to refute the error, entertained by many well-meaning persons, that the sin of our first parents was that of cohabitation. For a number of reasons this interpretation is not admissible. First, if the sin was that of the sexual relation, there was no need of representing it in allegorical form. Indeed, it would have been a serious error on the part of the narrator to use allegory in such a case, and thus make his meaning obscure, when he might have much better told in literal form just what the sin was. That is not a good allegory or parable that darkens the facts in the case, making interpretation either uncertain or impossible. More than that, the similarity between sexual intercourse and the eating of a tree of forbidden fruit is too indefinite and far-fetched to make a good comparison, especially in the earliest narrative

we have of human sin. The Biblical expression for sexual intercourse almost invariably is, "He knew his wife," which, indeed, is afterwards used relative to Adam and Eve. Why was not the current phrase employed here? That would have removed all doubt.

In the second place, nowhere in the Bible is cohabitation between man and wife represented as a sin; rather the contrary. Even in Genesis i. 28, immediately after the creation of man and woman, and before there is any hint of sin, we find this significant and decisive language: "And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Then in the 31st verse it is added: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." It surely would be unreasonable for God to command our first parents to multiply and replenish the earth, and then condemn them and drive them out of Eden for carrying out His injunction. Even in the New Testament the marriage relation in its true sense is sanctioned. Our Lord Himself refers to the original status of our first parents as the proper model for the marital relation, as over against adultery, fornication and polygamy. Besides, if cohabitation was the original sin, then marriage itself must be a wicked relation. How inconsistent it would have been for God to condemn our first parents for such an act, drive them out of Eden, curse the earth on their account, and bring all the woes of natural depravity upon all their descendants, and then afterwards sanction and command the very conduct and relation that caused all the disaster! No; the Bible is not so imbecile a book as that.

The sin of the original pair was precisely what it is represented to be in the Bible—the sin of disobedience through the eating of the forbidden fruit. That sinful act was, first of all, individual and concrete; then it was also representative and seminal, standing for all



sin, whose essence is disobedience, and containing the germ of all depravity in the posterity of the progenitors of the human race. As has been shown, the first sin was of such a character as to include potentially all sin, because it involved the body, the soul, and the organic union of the two. No other sin that could have been committed could have been so representative and all-inclusive.

There are several touches of realism in the narrative immediately following the act of disobedience that are worthy of our attention. For example, there is the statement that "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked." How true to facts as we know them to-day? Sinful indulgence does open men's eyes in one most salient way—makes them conscious of shame and brings remorse. Innocence destroyed brings a sense of disgrace. The writer cannot help thinking that before the fall, the physical organism of the first pair was so beautiful and perfect that no covering was needed, but the moment sin entered into the human constitution, the body lost its natural loveliness as the soul lost its innocence and purity, and consequently the sense of disharmony, shame and unsightliness was impinged upon the consciousness of the offenders.

Note, too, that, as soon as Adam and Eve heard God approaching, they hid themselves! That is realism indeed. It reads like an excerpt from a modern narrative or from human experience. No sooner has a man committed a sin to-day than he wants to hide from God; he fears to meet God face to face; he tries to shut the thought of God out of his mind, ensconcing himself sometimes behind the bushes of atheism; he endeavors to make himself believe that there never will be a judgment day when his sins will be revealed and an account must be rendered to Him from whom nothing can be disguised.



The pen of the inspired writer kept close to facts as we know them to-day when he represented Adam as trying to throw the responsibility for his sin upon other shoulders. First, he made an effort to put the blame upon the woman. How man-like! His male descendants have been doing the same thing ever since—blaming the other sex for many of their misdemeanors. Adam also said, "The woman *Thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." He sought to lay the blame ultimately upon God Himself. As much as to say, "If you had not given me the woman, or would have made her different, I never would have been led into this mistake!" To-day many men are disposed to put the blame of their wrong doing upon God, upon the constitution of things, upon their environments, upon heredity—almost anything to relieve themselves of personal responsibility. This proves, again, that the Bible narrative hews close to the facts of human nature.

When Eve tried to shift the blame upon the serpent, she proved herself the mother of the race. We have with our own ears heard people thrust the responsibility for their own wrong doing upon the devil, thereby disowning even their own share in the sin. Mother Eve may have been the first person, but she was certainly not the last, to make the evil one a convenient scapegoat.

Going further into the narrative, how true and well-balanced we find God's judgment on the case of the first transgression! First, He deals with the serpent, representing Satan, who was the original sinner and who beguiled our first parents into disobedience, and to him God meted out condign punishment. Then He dealt out punishment to the woman and the man respectively in the order of their transgression, thereby giving to each his just reward, as much as to say: "Satan, woman, and man all sinned, each in his or her

own way, and therefore each must bear the responsibility for his or her part in the great tragedy of transgression." None of them can be excused, and yet none of them is to bear the blame for the other's obliquity. Just so it is to-day—the seducer is responsible for his seduction; the enticed one for yielding. There is always a point in any ethical act where a free moral agent is responsible; there is always, as well, a point where his responsibility ends. Even God Himself is responsible for His act in creating a moral agent with the possibility of sinning, and we may rely upon it that He will bear His burden in the whole transaction, meting out only such penalty as is just and giving the reward that is due. "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust;" "The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench." The very fact that God, with the condemnation of the sin, promised a Redeemer, proves His goodness and justice; for by His own initiative and of His own free will and accord He established a plan for righting the wrong that had been done, and recovering man from his ruined condition.

## VI

### THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION OF CHRIST

HAVING in the preceding chapters treated of the making and unmaking of man, the next step in the logical process is to deal with his re-making. It would indeed be an unsatisfactory treatise that told us about "Paradise lost" without saying anything about "Paradise regained." If the Bible teaching is clear on the doctrines of the creation and fall of man, it is none the less explicit in its setting forth of the doctrine of the re-creation of man. In this respect it depicts a complete scheme. In portraying and justifying the Biblical plan for man's recovery, the logical steps will be, first, the miraculous conception of Christ; second, the need of the incarnation; third, the true doctrine of atonement; fourth, the *raison d'être* of the new birth; fifth, the ultimate purpose of the resurrection. These themes will be treated in successive chapters.

With the critical questions involved in the doctrine of the virgin birth of our Lord we shall not deal to any great extent in this chapter. Those who desire to enter into the merits of the questions of criticism are referred to Dr. James Orr's masterly work, "The Virgin Birth of Christ." It is gratifying indeed to find a scholar who is at the same time so thorough and so evangelical, proving that it is not true that all the scholarship of the day is in sympathy with the radical criticism. All persons who have had difficulties with the Biblical narratives of the birth of Christ, with the apparent silence of most of the New Testament

writers regarding it, and with the various myth and legend theories that have been propounded, should by all means read Dr. Orr's treatise.

There are, however, several questions raised in Dr. Orr's volume that it will be well to dwell upon for a little while, so as to make our subsequent discussion of the *rationale* of the virgin birth more thorough-going. First, there are two pointed and explicit gospel narratives of the miraculous conception of our Saviour. They are found in Matthew and Luke. Let us look at Matthew's recital: "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." It cannot be doubted for a moment that Matthew meant to convey the impression that our Lord was not conceived by natural generation, but by a direct act of the Holy Spirit. "And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying: Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.

"Now all this is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and *knew her not till she had brought forth a Son*; and he called His name Jesus."

If the foregoing quotation does not teach the doc-

trine of the true virginity of Mary and the true virgin birth of Christ, then language cannot be made to convey a clear and unmistakable meaning. Matthew even goes so far as to state that no cohabitation took place between Joseph and Mary prior to the birth of Jesus, even after their marriage, and he makes this declaration for the evident purpose of precluding the idea that Christ was of purely human generation. Therefore those who deny the miraculous birth of our Lord are driven to the position of radical criticism and must deny the historical integrity of the gospel narratives. We know, therefore, with whom we have to deal. As Dr. Orr pertinently remarks, those who oppose the virgin birth are the men who oppose the supernatural in general, whereas those who accept the divine or miraculous element in the Scriptures have no more difficulty in accepting this miracle than any other miracle of the Word of God.

Let us now turn to Luke's record of the miraculous birth. First, note the account of the conception of John the Baptist. An angel appeared to Zacharias and said to him: "Thy wife Elizabeth shall bear *thee* a son, and thou shalt call his name John." See how careful Luke is to indicate that John's conception came about by human generation, aided simply by a supernatural act of quickening. Observe now the difference in the angel's language to Mary, the mother of Jesus, shortly afterwards. Again and again she is called a virgin, not a wife, though betrothed to Joseph. After the first annunciation by the angel, she was almost overcome with fear and doubt, and her language is extremely significant. She exclaimed: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Here is an assertion of Mary's virginity from her own lips. To call her statement in question is to cast the worst slur imaginable on the character of the woman of history who has ever since been regarded as the sweet-



est, purest, most blessed of womankind. Then the angel said: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore the holy thing which is begotten of thee shall be called the Son of God. . . . And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Such a simple, chaste, dignified narrative carries on the face of it the hall-marks of sincerity and genuineness. If Mary was a woman of evil character, she was the most arch deceiver the world has ever known. Go further in the story and read her Magnificat, which is an expression of the most exalted spiritual rapture, the most immaculate purity, a model in all literature of true religious chant and song. There is what we might call a naïveté about the language and conduct of Mary which marks her as an innocent and holy woman. In not a word or act of her life does she betray the slightest consciousness of guilt. It is simply out of the question to attribute such an air of innocence and chastity to consummate acting.

As to the evangelists themselves, if Matthew and Luke did not tell a true story, they were either dupes or impostors. If the former, they were such stupid and gullible men that one cannot help wondering how their gospels could have ever gained so much credence throughout the centuries, winning thousands of people from sinful to righteous lives, and capturing the confidence and respect of many of the noblest intellects the world has ever seen. And could they have been deceivers? The very purity of their style and thought and the exalted moral influence their compositions have effected preclude such an assumption.

Besides, Matthew and Luke were of such an intellectual fibre as to put the signet of genuineness upon their narrations. Matthew was a tax-gatherer, a public officer, and therefore a man of more than ordinary

intelligence, who would not have been likely to be easily imposed on. Luke was a physician, and physicians are proverbially inclined to be skeptical of anything that does not occur in their special domain of study according to the laws of human physiology. We have heard more than one doctor declare that he could not believe the doctrine of the miraculous conception of Christ, because he never knew procreation to take place save in the natural way. Yet here is the physician Luke, a man intelligent enough to write literature which has endured through the centuries, reciting a story, with the utmost air of conviction, of a birth from a virgin through the overhadowing of the Holy Spirit! Is not that significant? Would he have been likely to accept a myth? A man of his profession would not have believed such a story without the most conclusive evidence of its truth. To suppose that both these intelligent men could have been deceived by a lustful and designing woman, and to such a degree as to believe that she had conceived the Son of God by the Holy Ghost, is, to our way of thinking, the height of credulity. We can more easily believe their story than believe that they could have been imposed on in such a stupid way. They were competent witnesses, and their testimony cannot be impeached.

We shall now summarize a few of the arguments of Dr. Orr for the benefit of those who may not be able to procure his work. Reviewing the critics who reject the doctrine of the virgin birth, we find that they differ so widely and radically among themselves as virtually to disprove one another's theories. The only thing they agree on is that they do not believe in our Saviour's supernatural conception. For instance, Harnack and Lobstein declare that the story, which they call a myth, must be of Hebrew origin, and they apparently make good their position, so far as furnish-

ing proof is concerned. On the other hand, Soltau and Cheyne produce just as convincing evidence that it must have been of Gentile origin and never could have sprung up out of Hebraic soil. You might say, therefore, that the negative critics neutralize and destroy one another, and we might stand off at one side and enjoy the *mêlée*. However, Dr. Orr enters the arena and forces both parties to retire. He marshals indubitable proof that such a myth could not have taken its rise among the Hebrews, for they were not disposed to myth-making, and such a myth as a conception by the Holy Ghost would have been contrary to all their traditions.

Most of the modern critics accept the hypothesis that the myth, as they call it, took its cue from the heathen mythologies, in which, as we know, the gods are often represented as having intercourse with women, and thereby giving birth to heroes and demi-gods. With this view Dr. Orr deals in a most thorough and convincing way. Take, for example, the coarse fables of the origin of Hermes, Dionysius, Esculapius, and Hercules. In all of them there is no idea of a virgin birth such as is described in Matthew and Luke. The Greek gods are conceived of as having parts, passions and forms like mortal men, and they beget children after the carnal manner. Says our author: "A god, inflamed by lust—Zeus is a chief sinner—surprises a maiden and has a child by her, but it is by natural generation. There is nothing here analogous to the virgin birth of the gospels. The stories themselves are incredibly vile. The better-minded in Greece and Rome were ashamed of them. Plato would have banished them from his Republic. They were, as Tertullian tells us, the subjects of public ridicule. It is a strange imagination that can suppose that these foul tales could have been taken over by the church, and, in the short space before the com-

position of our gospels, become the inspiration of the beautiful and chaste narratives of Matthew and Luke!"

Of the same immoral character are the crude fables about the superhuman origin of Plato, Alexander and Augustus. In none of these cases was the birth from a virgin. Alexander spread the report that he was not the son of Philip, but was begotten by a serpent cohabiting with his mother. In the case of Augustus, while his mother was asleep in the temple, Apollo visited her in the form of a serpent, and in the tenth month afterwards he—Augustus—was born. Think now for a moment of the idea that the pure-minded disciples of Christ, who went about doing good and advocating the loftiest doctrines of moral chastity, would borrow a myth of the origin of their holy Lord from such coarse, vulgar, lust-inspired stories as those just cited relative to the conduct of the gods of Greece and Rome. Such an imputation is worse than preposterous; it is a slander.

Some of the critics hie somewhat jauntily away over into India for their myth-manufactory, contending that the legend (so-called) of the miraculous birth of Christ got its inception from the story of the incarnation of Gautama. But there is not the slightest evidence that the early Christians, including the gospel writers, were familiar with the story of Buddha. Even if they were, it must have had so little influence at that time that it never could have gained enough headway to be incorporated in the Christian system and accepted as an article of faith. And what is the story of the conception and birth of Buddha? While his mother—a married woman, not a virgin at all—was asleep, she dreamed that a white, six-tusked elephant entered her side, and ten months later she gave birth to the child Gautama. Even if the evangelists ever heard this uncouth story, can you imagine for a moment that they would have appropriated it?



We shall follow the myth-mongers no further, but refer the reader to Dr. Orr's work, wherein it is shown that the critics' attempts to derive the idea of Christ's miraculous conception from the mythologies of Egypt, Persia and Babylonia fare no better.

Many of the critics maintain that the virgin birth has no doctrinal significance anyway; that it might be given up without any hurt to the Christian system; therefore, why must we be asked to believe something that seems to be unreasonable when nothing is to be gained by it? But we reply that the critics themselves are inconsistent when they make such a claim; because, in trying to account for the origin of the story—they call it a myth—among the early Christians, they contend that it arose as an endeavor to explain and justify the supernatural character of Jesus. If that is true, the virgin birth must lie at the very basis of faith in the divinity of Christ. If the enemies of the doctrine appreciate its vital connection with the doctrine of the deity of our Lord, orthodox believers have still more interest in recognizing such a relation. We are persuaded that if the doctrine of the miraculous birth, with all that is implied in it, were surrendered, we might as well make up our minds at once to give up the doctrine of Christ's deity; and that would mean the evacuation of the very citadel of the Christian system of truth.

Suppose, now, we look at the doctrine of the virgin birth from the viewpoint of reason, and see whether it has a rational basis.\* In the first place, no one can deny that it is in perfect consistence with the whole Biblical scheme of truth, which is at the same time realistic and supernatural. By this we mean that the supernatural element, according to the Bible, is al-

\* The arguments that follow in this chapter are not to be accredited to Dr. Orr, and therefore he must not be held responsible for any faults that may occur in the presentation.



ways vitally and organically connected with the real and natural world. Go back to the narrative in Genesis ii., which rehearses the story of man's creation. Prior to that act, God had made the world; and it was a real world, not a phantasmagoria of some kind—real material substance, real soil, real grass, animals, air, water, and so on. Then God came down into the garden of Eden, which was a real garden, and taking a portion of the finest soil of the garden, he molded it into the form of a human body—a body that must have been composed of real material, just as our bodies are to-day—a subject dealt with sufficiently in a preceding chapter. Then Elohim infused into the body the breath of life, so that man became a living being.

Thus the first Adam was created. He was the federal head of the human family, and was designed to lead his posterity to realms of blessedness forevermore. But he abused his freedom, and ate of the forbidden fruit. In this way he nullified his headship of the race, recreant to the trust reposed in him. Therefore as the ethical and spiritual head of the human family he was deposed, and a new federal head had to be constituted. But constitutionally and logically the new head had to be organically connected with the race of beings that had sinned and were to be redeemed. If another human nature than the one to be redeemed had been created there would have been a break in the whole plan of human life. God's scheme would have lacked organic unity and would have been merely a mechanical re-arrangement—in other words, a mere makeshift. God does not work in that way. His entire universe has stamped upon it everywhere the characteristic of organic consistency and harmony. See how the Biblical story of the incarnation fits into the divine scheme of human history and human redemption. In the beginning God created the first

Adam, connecting him vitally with the nature that He had previously created. Now when a new Federal Head is to be constituted to lead the human race back to its pristine purity and its intended destiny, God comes again and forms a new human nature in essentially the same way that He formed the original human nature—that is, out of precisely the same substance, physical and psychical; He does not make another human nature, and arbitrarily close up the cleavage between the two. No; He takes of the human nature that has already been created and that is to be reinstated, re-forms it, purifies it from all corruption, preserves it from all defilement, gives it birth according to the laws instituted in the beginning, and thus sets forth in the world a new and perfect Adam who is to be the race's Federal Head and lead it to victory over sin. Thus, while we still receive our corrupt nature from the first Adam, we receive our new nature from Christ by virtue of direct re-birth, which we call regeneration. This applies even to the resurrection of the body, for the first Adam leads our bodies down to death and the tomb; but the contact of the resurrected body of the New Adam with our bodies at the last day will revive them and start them on their glorious destiny of immortal life.

Now, whatever else may be thought of this method of argument, it will be seen that the incarnation of the Logos by means of the miraculous birth is congruous with the whole Biblical scheme of human creation, redemption and destiny. That, we take it, is a strong proof of its truth. If any man rejects this Biblical program, he is all at sea as to how God will save the human family, or whether He will save it at all.

Let us look at the doctrine from another point of view. If Christ's human nature, body and soul, had been generated in the natural way, the law of heredity, which is one of God's laws, would have stepped

in and corrupted that nature; in which case human redemption would have been doomed to be a failure from the start; for if the first Adam, who was created innocent, made a failure, how much more surely would the second Adam have failed if a carnal nature had been entailed upon Him! Figure it as you will, a miracle had to be performed in the conception of our Lord, if He was to be the Redeemer. God might, perhaps, have permitted the conception to take place in the natural way, and exerted His supernatural power to prevent the transmission of Adamic corruption; but that would have been just as much of a miracle as the virgin birth. But why was it not done in that way? Would it not have given Christ an immaculate conception just as the virgin birth did? It might have; but Christ was to be more than merely an immaculate man; Adam was such a man, and had failed. More than that, Christ had a task on His hands that did not belong to the original man. He had not only to become the new Federal Head of the race; He also had to rescue a race that was lost and steeped in sin; He had, in addition, to make atonement for the sin that had outraged God's moral law. So we repeat, He had to be more than an immaculate man as Adam was. He had to be God as well as man; divine as well as human. And we maintain that, in the very constitution of things, if He had been generated in the natural way, even though all the corruption inherent in such an act had been eliminated, there would not have been the possibility of a real, vital, personal union of divinity and humanity in His person. In order to constitute a divine-human personality, the divine Being had to enter into the procreative depths of humanity and select and assume a human nature of His formation and purifying, and unite Himself personally with it. It must be bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, soul of our soul, in order to be

organically connected with the human race; but it must be our nature lifted out of itself, separated, purified, transmuted—a human nature that, strangely and mysteriously enough, could be “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.”

Perhaps it may still be urged by the objector that the human nature of Christ might have been procreated in the natural way and the divine Logos connected with it, thus making, after all, a divine-human personality. A little sturdy thought will convince anyone that such a procedure would have been contrary to the very nature of things—unconstitutional as well as illogical. First, it would have been simply a connection of the divine with the human nature, not an assumption of the human nature by the divine. Hence the relation would have been arbitrary and not vital and organic. Second, that method would have given our Lord a dual personality. Natural procreation would have made Him a complete human person; then, if the divine Logos had been united with Him, there would have been two persons in the one being; which would not only be absurd, but would be contrary to all the laws of the universe, in which such an anomaly as a twofold personality is not known. The superficial thinker might reply that the human personality might have been merged into the divine. Not so; for then the human personality would have had to be destroyed, blotted out, rendered null and void—a divine act that is simply preposterous and unthinkable. If God never destroys even an atom that has once been created, how much less would He annihilate a personality that He has once brought into existence!

No; the more you ponder the matter in the philosophical sense, the more thoroughly you must be convinced that there was only one way in which the divine incarnation could have rightly taken place, and



that was by means of the virgin birth, in which the Logos took for Himself a germinal portion of human nature from the inmost nature, psychical and physical, of a woman, assumed it in a real hypostatic union with the divine, and thus made that unique Person whom we call the God-Man. Thus by taking of the human nature already created, the Logos kept His solidarity with the human family; making a real union between God and man possible.

May we add still another thought simply to show how rationally God proceeded in all the acts of redeeming love and grace? The Bible says that Christ was made of a woman. Why only a woman? Might it not be thought that the unity of the human family was broken by the use of only one sex in the act of conception and incarnation? But such is not the case when you remember the whole Biblical scheme of human creation and redemption. Go back to the Edenic garden again, and you will find that God first created the man, and from a portion of his constitution He made woman, so that woman is composed seminally of the original human nature that was created in the beginning, and thus the solidarity of the race remains intact. Now, when the Logos took of the nature of the Virgin Mary, even without the intervention of the masculine sex, He was assuming potentially the whole of human nature, and not simply a part of it. How suggestive, therefore, the name that Christ so often applied to Himself—the Son of Man; not the Son of *a* man, but the Son of *Man*, which means the Son of *Humanity*. Therefore He was more than the archetypal man; more than the immaculate man; He was the Universal Man; in Him was the sum and substance and nucleus of the whole human family, just as the embryo of all the oak forests was in the original acorn. Therefore He could be the Federal Head of the redeemed humanity that He was to bring back to



God; therefore, too, He was able to pay the debt of the whole human race, composed of millions of beings, all sinners, making complete atonement for their iniquities; as the Scripture puts it, "tasting death for every man." This He could have done only by assuming potentially human nature in its entirety. And He could have assumed human nature in its completeness only by means of the conception by the Holy Spirit in a virgin. We think, therefore, that the Bible doctrine of Christ's conception is vindicated.

We desire here to touch upon another point that we have never seen explained or even hinted at in any of the works of theology or criticism that have come to our notice. It is this—that the conception of the Son of God took place by the Holy Ghost. Why was it the third person of the Holy Trinity that formed the embryo in the womb of Mary? Why did not the second person perform that function Himself? Can an intelligent answer be given to that question? We think it can. Here are the reasons: It would have been absurd for any kind of a being to conceive Himself. Such an anomaly is known nowhere in all the universe. It is reasonable to assume that when God made the world, He made it in something like consonance with the nature of His own being. He surely would not have made it in entire unlikeness to the laws of His own nature, for everywhere we find Him a God of reason and harmony and not of contradictions. Therefore, for one person of the Trinity to beget Himself would be opposed to the very constitution of things.

Next, notice the unity in the entire Biblical system of truth. In the beginning God created all things, but it was the Spirit who brooded over the face of the deep and implanted the germs of primordial life. The earliest conception, therefore, in the world of nature took place by the Holy Spirit. To be consistent, the Spirit should also be the active agent in subsequent

conceptions, which would include the conception in the Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, the new birth takes place through the active agency of the Holy Ghost. Whenever Christ is born in a human heart, the Holy Spirit originates the new life. This agrees with the fact that the original conception of Christ in the nature of the virgin took place by the Holy Spirit. Once more, after Christ had ascended to God's right hand, He poured the Spirit upon the church both to implant the new regenerate life in the hearts of believers and to bear witness with their spirits to the Saviourship and redeeming power of Jesus Christ. That is, the same Spirit who originally brooded over the Virgin Mary, forming the new, unique person of the God-Man, also implants that new life in us and bears testimony to His hypostatic character. What a consistent scheme is the Biblical one when properly and comprehensively interpreted! How matchless are the wisdom and the grace that devised and carried out a plan whereby fallen humanity could be lifted up to the plane of divinity, joined with it in bonds of organic and most precious unity and fellowship, and saved and glorified by this wonderful conjunction; while at the same time real atonement could be made for sin, the law of righteousness upheld, and God remain just, and the justifier of everyone who accepts the divine-human Redeemer whom He so graciously provided!

## VII

### THE RATIONAL BASIS OF THE INCARNATION

THE fact that a divine incarnation is an important element in several of the great ethnic religions of the world, particularly of Buddhism, would seem to point to something in the constitution of human nature demanding such an act of the Supreme Being. It cannot be denied that the profounder the religion and the better adapted to human need, the more likely it is to contain this doctrine as an essential part of its system. Nor should we fail to remember that "God hath not left Himself without a witness in any nation," and, therefore, the conception of an incarnation of the divine may be a part of that sporadic revelation which is still preserved in heathen nations—a glimmering remnant of the original disclosure that God vouchsafed to mankind.

At all events, no one will deny that the doctrine of the divine incarnation is a vital factor in the Biblical system of truth. Should anyone challenge this statement, he would be compelled to do violence to a clear and positive Scriptural exegesis. For instance, in the first chapter of St. John's gospel there is the plain statement, "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God;" and afterwards, in the same chapter, this declaration is added: "And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The logic is inevitable: the Logos was God; the Logos became flesh; therefore, God became incarnated. Paul also, in speaking of Christ, calls Him "God manifest in the flesh."

We take it for granted, therefore, without further argument, that the tenet of the divine incarnation is explicitly taught in the Bible. What, then, is its logical justification? While it could not have been discovered by unaided human intelligence, yet, having been revealed in the Holy Scriptures, we believe it can be shown to be consistent with reason—indeed, demanded by a process of exact thinking. What is the method of reasoning by which this doctrine of Holy Writ can be supported?

First, it is obvious that a breach had been made in some way between God and man. How this breach occurred has already been shown in the chapter relating to the fall of man. Everyone must realize, even by a cursory glance at the cosmos, that there is something wrong; that man is not at peace with God; that he fears Him and seeks to hide himself from Him, even as our first parents did immediately after their disobedience. This gulf between man and his Maker becomes so widened in some cases that men go so far as to doubt and deny the divine existence altogether. There is not that free, untrammelled intercourse that we would reasonably expect to find subsisting between the Creator and the rational beings He has created. One would naturally suppose that the relation between God and man would be one of sympathetic and delightful reciprocity; whereas, sad to say, it is one of constraint and often even of antipathy on man's part.

Therefore, one of the following alternatives must be accepted: Either the atheist is right and there is no God, or a distressful alienation has occurred between God and man. But the atheist must be in error, because if there were no God, surely man never could have formed a conception of a Divine Being; and, moreover, man could have no consciousness of estrangement from Him, nor any sense of moral guilt on

account of that aversion. In consequence, we are shut up to the alternative that a breach separates between divinity and humanity.

That being true, is it not evident that man cannot bridge the chasm? How could he? It is a moral chasm, and where would man, unaided, procure the ability to throw a passageway from this side to the other? For man it is an impassable gulf, deep and wide. But it would be possible for God, who, having done no wrong, still retains His infinite moral ability, to come across the gulf from His side to man's, and to span it with His power, justice and grace. Or suppose we change the figure somewhat, using terms that are more likely to be employed in theological discussions. Man suffered a *lapse* from his Maker—he *fell*. In that case how could man in his own strength lift himself up to God again? It would be an ethical impossibility, just as it would be a physical impossibility for him to lift himself up through empty space. But God could come down to man, take him in the arms of His grace and power, and lift him up again to the plane of the divine. In other words, humanity was helpless through its lapse from divinity; then divinity, moved with love, came down to recover the fallen human race. Is not that rational? Is it not what we would be justified in expecting from a wise and merciful God?

The incarnation of the Son of God, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, meets every ethical and logical emergency of the situation—that is, divinity, in the person of the Logos, came down from heaven, assumed humanity in potential and seminal form, wrought righteousness therewith in a life of perfect obedience, made atonement for sin by vicarious suffering and death, rose from the tomb with that same humanity, then carried it to the right hand of God, where it was glorified, filled with all the divine fullness,



so that it became ubiquitous by virtue of its most perfect personal union with the divine, being thereby empowered to come into real and vitalizing contact with sinful humanity, and rescue, permeate, transfigure it with its own glorious life, power and grace. The point of contact between sinful humanity and the glorified humanity of our Lord is faith, engendered by the Holy Spirit sent from and by the glorified and exalted theanthropic person of the one Mediator and Redeemer. God bridged the chasm. It is a blessed doctrine—too good and beautiful not to be true.

Thus it will be seen that the scheme of redemption disclosed in the Sacred Writings is more than logical, more than rational; it is altogether glorious and inspiring. What an uplift it gives to the soul to contemplate it! What a noble stamp it puts upon our humanity, sinful and bedraggled though it is, to know that the eternal Logos assumed and rescued it, and brought it back to the possibility of so marvelous a destiny!

Suppose we look at the doctrine of the incarnation from another viewpoint: It was man, not angels, not a divine being, who had violated the divine law. Hence man should also pay the penalty and make the reparation. It surely would not be right nor rational for another kind of being than the transgressor to suffer the consequences of his sin. Therefore humanity must pay that debt, must expiate that wrong. The divine Logos, by assuming humanity in potential form, enabled the very species of being who had perpetrated the offense to discharge the moral obligation and render propitiation and satisfaction to violated justice. Is not that also rational? And it was by virtue of the inseparable union of the divine with the human that a full equivalent for the sin of the whole race could be rendered; for the union of divinity with humanity in Christ gave to the latter an infinite value and power and grace.

Another fact that makes a divine incarnation necessary is man's need of divine sympathy, of the most intimate fellowship in his ruined and distressed condition. True, God might have assured him verbally of His sympathy, and the assurance would have been precious and helpful; but, after all, man might well and justly have replied to such divine overtures: "Thou art great and mighty and divine, and hast therefore never felt the pangs of sin, the anguish of bodily and mental suffering, the distress of human limitation, and so Thou canst not enter into complete sympathy and touch with our sorrows." Whether God needed the incarnation to establish this bond of fellowship or not, we would not presume to assert; but surely man needed it in order to feel the assurance of divine compassion.

It is possible to state clearly and concretely just how this need of the human soul is met in the incarnation of the Son of God. Since He came in the flesh and suffered with and for the human race, every troubled heart can go to Him and claim a community of experience. With much comfort the contrite sinner can say: "We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but One who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." In the abandonment of sorrow, we may go to Him with this comforting assurance: "Lord, Thou knowest what it means to suffer to the point of despair, for from Thy lips was wrung the cry, 'My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?'" Even little children may carry their childlike grievances to Him, for He was once a child and knows the joys and sorrows of childhood. The youth may go to Him for help and compassion, for He passed through the trying ordeals of the juvenile and immature period; and matured life, carking care, pressing responsibility and the whole development and discipline of earthly experience find in Him a sympathetic Friend in whom is grace to help in every time of need.

And do we not need a divine-human Friend as well as a divine-human Saviour? To put it more accurately, is not the very friendship of Jesus an elemental part of His work as the Redeemer of the human family? While this process of reasoning may not carry absolute conviction to the skeptical mind, yet surely much must be gained in removing obstacles to faith by a consideration of the fact that the divine Logos, in assuming human nature, became a Redeemer with whom a most intimate relationship of human sympathy has been established, thus making the incarnation something that is vital and organic in the recovery of mankind. It cannot be denied that in actual experience many believers have received much comfort, strength and inspiration in feeling the sympathetic touch of the Divine One, who came in the flesh and took on Him the form of a servant.

An excellent Christian woman of our acquaintance was devoted to helping the poor of the city in which she lived. Being wealthy, she and several of her rich and benevolent friends first went into the homes of penury, wearing their rich apparel and ornaments. They soon found, however, that the poor people shrank from them, abashed by the evidences of wealth in the attire of their visitors, so that no basis of mutuality could be found. To obviate the difficulty, the philanthropic women imitated the example of their divine Master; they laid aside their rich habiliments, dressed themselves in plain garments, and then, in going about doing good, they found that they could much more easily win the confidence of their poor beneficiaries. So the divine Logos laid aside His glory and assumed the habiliments of the very beings He came to help and recover. Indeed, how could men look upon the face of the Infinite One unless He veiled His resplendence?

Furthermore, nothing forms so strong an incentive to

human striving to realize the ideal life as the influence of example. Suppose God had simply revealed the law to sinful humanity, saying, "There is the standard of righteousness; strive to attain it." His command could have had the value of only a divine precept, which would, to be sure, have been of great significance to the race; but, after all, it would have lacked real inspiration to moral achievement, for it would have stood alone, without the help of a concrete example of high and holy living. Suppose now, for the sake of the argument, that God Himself—that is, the Logos—took upon Him our nature, placed Himself in the midst of a real human environment, with all its joys, sorrows and tests, lived a truly human life here on earth, and conquered sin and temptation in every conflict—who can estimate the value and inspiration of such an example in spurring the human family on to moral and spiritual endeavor? The teaching of Christ is of inestimable value to man, but when to it is added the influence of His example, its potency is multiplied many fold. In the upward striving of the race from paganism to Christianity, from sin to salvation, the Model Life has proved to be of great actual service. Many a Christian would have faltered in the struggle with evil had it not been for the influence of the copy set him by the Captain of his salvation. Thus reason and experience prove that the incarnation of the divine Logos is adapted to meet one of the deepest needs of humanity, the need of a Model Life in a world of sin and trial, of a concrete example. This harmonizes with the teaching of the Scriptures, which set forth Christ as our "ensample." Would it not be like a merciful and gracious God to furnish a human copy of living, in perfect conformity with the divine law, for the inspiration and imitation of His fallen children?

Still deeper in the heart of humanity lies the need



of a divine incarnation. Professions of love have their value; deeds of love are still more impressive and effectual; but in both something is lacking in the appeal they make to the human heart, unless they cost the doer some sacrifice—that is, it is self-denying love that most powerfully affects and wins the human heart. How true this is in all human experience! One man loves another, and evinces his love in many ways; but by and by there comes an occasion when he makes a real sacrifice for his neighbor, enduring privation, suffering pain in his stead; then and then only is the heart of the recipient really touched with the exhibition of neighborly affection, and all witnesses of the act of self-abnegation applaud it and the spirit it displays.

God declared in the Scriptures that He loved His sinful, suffering children; He also proved His love by many acts of providence and revelation; yet the final appeal was lacking until He emptied Himself, took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto the death of the cross in man's behalf.

A God who will limit Himself for man and suffer for him will display the deepest love and most effectually touch the hearts of the objects of His pity. Is it not an undeniable fact that all through the Christian centuries men and women have been persuaded, won, conquered by the pure, unselfish, self-denying love of God in giving His Son, and of the Son in assuming human nature and paying the penalty of human transgression in unspeakable suffering? Sacrificial love is the kind of love that really merits the name and makes effective appeal to the heart.

This argument is forcibly expressed in a valuable work by Dr. A. W. Moore, entitled "The Rational Basis of Orthodoxy" (Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston), page 234:

"That the spirit of self-sacrifice is an element of the



divine character may indeed be inferred from the fact that it has shown itself from time immemorial in human nature, and is therefore presumably one of the ethical qualities that man is deriving from the parent Mind. There is a vast difference, however, in respect to stimulating power and winning influence between a potential and an actual beneficence. The world loves not those who would sacrifice themselves for others if they could find an opportunity, but those who have found one and used it. Between a character which is said to be capable of self-denial for others and one that has exhibited it, there is all the difference in respect to impressiveness and the power to excite imitation that there is between precept and example. It would seem to be certain, therefore, that God must manifest a love which can be believed to have cost Him supreme self-forgetfulness and privation, if He is to receive from men the highest quality of devotion which human nature is able to evince."

At this point another thought is germane. Man finds it difficult to realize and comprehend the abstract and purely spiritual. Hence philosophical studies are usually among the last in the university curriculum. Now the Scripture teaches that God is a Spirit. Luther's catechism defines Him as "a Spirit, uncreated and perfect." How utterly impossible it is, however, to obtain anything like a clear conception of an infinite Spirit, to whom we cannot ascribe time or space or form! The fact is, the human mind soon abandons the attempt to grasp the idea. Who is God? What is God? What is God like? These are questions no one can answer. Most people, even the most intellectual and spiritual, regard the conception of the infinite God merely as a Spirit, as an incomprehensible abstraction. This fact is a sad handicap to real communion with Him. If God can in some way help our infirmity, can condescend to our weakness of apprehen-

sion, will it not be gracious in Him to do so? If He is a loving God, is it not likely that He will devise some plan by which His rational and worshipping creatures may obtain a clearer view of Him? It would appear so.

What more effective and convincing method could He employ than to come out of the purely spiritual sphere and manifest Himself in the physical and visible realm? In other words, nothing He could do would be more appealing than to come down out of heaven, assume a tangible form, and make His abode with men; so to speak, descend from the realm of the abstract into the realm of the concrete. In the Biblical scheme of salvation and revelation through the incarnate Logos we have this fundamental need of human nature fully and graciously met. Christ is God come to us in concrete form. Therefore He can be apprehended.

At this point another quotation from Dr. Moore's "The Rational Basis of Orthodoxy" will be apropos:

"Another need associated with, if not involved in, the one just described, is that of divine companionship. There is something discouraging to the average mind in the thought of the gulf which separates the finite from the infinite. The enjoyment felt by the child in the society of its father, the encouragement which the private soldier derives from any friendship shown him by his commander-in-chief, the loyal devotion with which a peasant is inspired when he becomes an object of kindly interest to his sovereign, are repeated and enlarged in the experiences of those who believe that God has entered into personal relations with them, and has not felt Himself too far above them to make Himself one of them." Then the author refers to the theophanies of the Old Testament and of pagan literature, and concludes by saying: "They show the way in which God must come to men

in order to win them." And thus the Bible teaches that He did come in the incarnation.

Profoundest of all, however, is the conception that the Logos took up humanity seminally by assuming it from the Virgin Mary, sanctified it, glorified it by exaltation to the right hand of God and the transfiguration of the divine fullness, and now through it comes into direct contact with our lapsed humanity, the point of contact being our faith, implants the fructifying seed or power of the new life, and thus lifts humanity to its exalted and most glorious destiny.

Joined with this view of the incarnation is the need, implanted deep in the bosom of humanity, of the ubiquity of Christ's human nature. Such a power was imparted to it by virtue of the hypostatic union of the divine and human in the person of Christ, connoted with the sublime doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. With this doctrine held clearly in mind and become a fact of religious experience, we have no occasion for stumbling over the doctrine of the sacramental presence and impartation of the glorified humanity of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. While it is in a sense a special presence which we term sacramental, because the ordinance is of a specific character, yet the real presence of Christ in the Holy Supper is not different in kind or genus from His presence at all times—the presence of His theanthropic person; for He Himself gives the assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

We would here propound the question how God could rescue, save and sanctify human nature except by direct organic contact. Is it not true that, in the whole domain of nature, direct contact is required for fertilization, for development, for ultimate perfection? What better way could God have devised for establishing direct and organic contact with humanity than by a union of the divine and human in the person

of Christ and then bringing that divine-human person as a fructifying germ into real contact with the mass of humanity? It is surely a noble conception, worthy of divine wisdom, creditable to divine love. It is a "natural law in the spiritual realm"—better still, it is the same fundamental law running through both realms, thus making all the universe an organic unity.

This conception will explain that somewhat enigmatical saying of Christ: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." (John vi. 56-58.) Apply this passage to the preceding argument relative to the union of the divine and human in Christ and His direct living contact with the believer in faith, and its meaning will become as clear as the sunlight, and will be seen to be as philosophical as it is explicit.

The same mode of reasoning may be applied to the restitution of the order of nature through the incarnation of the Logos; for the Second Person of the Trinity assumed not only the form of humanity, but also the form of material nature. His body was a real body, its substance as real as that of our bodies and the same in kind, and therefore composed of the same material as the world of natural substance. By His exaltation to God's right hand, the incarnate Logos glorified a portion of the physical substance of the natural world, and that has become the transfiguring nucleus or germ or potency of the coming glorified earth. Hence the Scripture says (2 Pet. iii. 13): "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." True, it is possible that God might have restored lapsed humanity and nature by a simple edict of His omnipotence; but it would not have been an organic recovery such as we have through the incarna-



tion, and would not, therefore, have been in harmony with the constitution of things as we know them.

One thought more has a deep theological and philosophical significance. The human race must have a federal head. According to natural generation that head is Adam, the progenitor of the human family. Judged by the natural laws and constitutions as we know them in the world, what the primal ancestor of the race would be and do, that would be stamped indelibly on all his progeny. The modern scientific idea of heredity would also lead to a like conclusion. But, as has been seen in a preceding chapter, Adam sinned and fell from God, and thereby, as federal head of the race, gave his descendants a tendency toward evil. What would be needed, now, in the nature of the case to rescue the humanity that has thus been corrupted? If in some way a new federal head could be constituted, would it not solve the problem both ethnically and ethically? Would not such a method be better than an arbitrary and artificial device? Would not God, who does everything in the natural domain by the method of organic procedure, be likely to follow the same plan in the higher spiritual realm?

According to the Bible, He has done so. A new federal head for the race was constituted when the divine Logos assumed human nature, bore it triumphantly through life, temptation, death, the grave, raised it from the dead, and exalted and glorified it at God's right hand. By attaching themselves by faith to the new federal head of the race, believers become members of a redeemed and renewed human household.

Is not this philosophical? It is precisely the teaching of the New Testament, which says (1 Cor. xv. 22 and 45): "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." The first captain of the race



made a failure and led his followers to ignominious defeat; the second Captain, the Captain of our salvation, won a complete victory, and hence was placed at the head of the army of the redeemed and triumphant.

Notice should be taken of an objection often urged against the Biblical doctrine of the hypostatic union—the union of the divine and human in the person of Christ. “How can these things be?” is the Nicodemus-like question often asked. How can Christ be God and man at the same time? To some minds this seems to be not only an insoluble mystery, but a mystery too strange and unnatural to be believed. So far as refusing to accept a doctrine because it is mysterious is concerned, that course would lead to universal doubt; for everything which you try to analyze fundamentally is inexplicable.

But let us see whether the incarnation of the Logos is a mystery that is irrational. Many wise scientific thinkers of the day accept the doctrine of the divine immanence, believing that God is in the natural universe and in all parts of it. Indeed, if there is a personal God—and we have already discussed the doctrine of the divine existence—He must be immanent in His creation. But can we understand that? Well might we ask, How can God be in nature and yet no part of nature? No one can comprehend it. Not only so, but, unless we entertain the crude idea that God is only a spatial substance—in which case He would be no God at all, but merely an impersonal substance like an ether—then He must be in every part of His dominion in all the fullness of His being. The tiny dewdrop, like the sun which it reflects, must contain Him. He must be personally present in the infinitesimal as well as in the infinite. Who can comprehend this mystery? Who can suggest even a possible explanation of it? No one. Yet it must be so,

or we must abandon the idea of the divine existence. This being so, why should our intelligence be shocked and our faith made to stumble over the mystery of the union of the divine and human in Christ?

There is also a union of the divine and human in the true believer. While it is not a personal union, as is that of the junction of the two natures in Christ, it is, after all, suggestive of it, and is little, if any, more explainable. The Christian declares that God dwells in his heart, reigns there. Similar are certain expressions of Scripture: "I in you, and ye in Me;" "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit;" "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Thus there is a sort of incarnation of the infinite in every true disciple of our Lord. But how can the infinite God dwell in a finite heart? You feel no special difficulty, however, in accepting the fact which is a matter of actual experience with the believer; but the moment you attempt to explain it, or philosophize about it, or encase it in a scientific formula, you find yourself face to face with an inexplicable mystery. Why, then, should we marvel at the mystery of God manifest in the flesh in the person of Christ? If the omnipotent God can effect a mystical union with the believer, is it beyond belief that He can effect a personal and hypostatic union in Christ?

Moreover, the believer is conscious of the personal presence of God. It is not a mere impersonal force touching him. How can God be personally present with believers in all parts of the world at the same time? Verily the omnipresence of God is as profound a mystery as His specialized and incarnated presence in Christ.

Some of the facts of psychology may afford analogies and illustrations of the divine incarnation. For example, a great mind does not necessarily dwell in a large brain. Some men of extremely large

cranial dimensions have comparatively feeble intellects, and *vice versa*. More seems to depend on the quality than the quantity of the brain. Often the intensive is more potential than the extensive.

Now, God is mind, for, as to essence, mind and spirit are the same thing. Does not the fact that a great human mind may dwell in a small human brain afford at least a hint of how it may be that the divine mind may take up His abode in a human form? So far as we know, mind does not have shape, density, dimension, or spatial limitation, but is a substance of quite a different order from material substance. Therefore its connection with material things need impose on us no intellectual difficulties.

Another attribute of mind or of mental action may be noted here—that is, that thought is not subject to the limitations of space and time. Standing before an audience of many hundred people you may, if you can hold their attention, sway them at your will, sending their minds—or at least their thoughts—to many parts of the world and the universe in a few minutes, merely by suggestion. Tell them to think of California, and at once every mind leaps over the intervening distance of two or three thousand miles to the Western State. Then suggest in quick succession Hawaii, Japan, India, Africa, the moon, Jupiter, Saturn, the sun, the most distant star, and every mind swings in immediate obedience to the various localities indicated, showing how little the mind's action can be circumscribed by time and space. If this is true of what we term finite mind, how much more wonderful must be the action of the Infinite Mind! Therefore, for God, the infinite Logos, to posit Himself in a special way in the humanity He assumed in the person of Christ, and yet at the same time be everywhere present on earth and in heaven, ought to raise no real difficulty in the way of faith or intellectual

assent. It explains, too, that strange and otherwise inexplicable saying of Christ: "No man hath ascended into heaven but He that hath descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, *who is in heaven.*"

Possibly it may be objected that our illustration is faulty in this regard, that, after all, it is not the human mind, but only its product, human thought, that can traverse the distances between widely separated points at a moment's notice. Our reply is, that, with the Infinite Spirit, mind and thought must be conterminous, for where God's thought is, there He must be also. Otherwise He would be finite, not infinite; relative, not absolute. For this reason the personal habitation of the divine Logos in the humanity of Christ is not irrational, finding analogies and illustrations in the domain of human experience.

That is, the incarnation has a rational basis. It imposes no real obstacles to an intelligent faith. In order to accept it the thinker need not abrogate his reason nor stultify his intelligence. All of which encourages us to believe that the other doctrines of Holy Writ, when they are properly apprehended, have a rational basis.

## VIII

### THE ATONEMENT A VICARIOUS SACRIFICE

PERHAPS no Biblical doctrine, save that of eternal retribution, has so often been called in question as the orthodox view of the atonement. The *raison d'être* of the doctrine lies back in the realm of ontology, a domain that is difficult for most minds to enter and traverse, and that is perhaps the reason so many persons have stumbled over the difficulties. It is easier to take a superficial view, even though men may proclaim themselves the disciples of reason; yet a slight and partial view of the atonement is fatal, giving wrong results in all cases.

Before examining the *rationale* of the orthodox doctrine, let us notice some of the erroneous theories that are often held. You frequently hear men say glibly: "The atonement means nothing but at-onement; it is simply at-onement between God and man, nothing more, nothing less!" Now, that statement is somewhat catchy, because it is a play on words, a rhetorical figure that always attracts attention, and with some people it is the final argument. However, a moment's thought will show that it is no explanation, no reason. The crucial question is: Why and how is it that the life and death of Christ make at-onement between a holy God and sinful man. You will observe that the utterer of the glib epigram will then have to rise and explain, and in doing so he will have to declare his view of the atonement, which you will usually find is not, after all, the Scriptural and orthodox view.



More than that, the words "atonement" and "at-onement" do not mean the same thing. Whatever may be the etymological history of the word "atonement," it is obvious that at the present day the idea of atonement does not convey the idea of mere at-onement. The words are not synonyms. Suppose that a man has committed a crime against his fellow-man or the civil statutes, and we say, "He has made ample *atonement* for his transgression," what do we mean? Simply that there is now at-onement between him and the party he wronged? No, indeed! We do not mean that; we mean a good deal more than that. We mean that he has made reparation, has rendered satisfaction, has in some way paid the penalty of his wrong-doing. It is only because he has made atonement for his crime that there is at-onement between him and the law. Therefore, you see that the maker of the blithe aphorism is not only superficial, but confuses cause and effect.

It may be interesting to look at the lexicography of the word "atone" and its derivative, "atonement." Here before us is Webster's "International Dictionary," brought up-to-date. Let us consult it. The verb "atone," intransitive, is derived from *at one*. Then the first definition is: "To agree; to be in accordance; to accord." What then? This definition is marked *obsolete*. Therefore the word "atone" no longer means merely to be "at one." Then follows the second definition, which is *not* marked obsolete: "To stand as an equivalent; to make reparation, compensation or amends, for an offense or a crime." That is the idea that everybody entertains of making atonement. The verb in the transitive form yields the same results; the first definition being: "To set at one; to reduce to concord; to reconcile, as parties at variance; to appease;" and this is also marked obsolete. The second definition, "to unite in making," is designated obsolete

and rare. The third definition is the one that obtains to-day in good usage: "To make satisfaction for; to expiate;" then this line is quoted from Pope: "Or each *atone* his guilty love with life."

What says the lexicon of the noun "atonement"? Definition one: "(Literally, a setting *at one*.) Reconciliation, restoration of friendly relations; agreement; concord. (*Archaic.*)" Definition two, giving the real meaning of the word: "Satisfaction or reparation made by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing or suffering that which will be received in satisfaction for an offense or injury; expiation; amends;—with *for*. Specifically, in theology: The expiation of sin made by the obedience, personal sufferings and death of Christ."

Webster's definitions give precisely the orthodox view of the atonement, and therefore etymology is not on the side of the epigram-maker. Atonement means much more than at-onement. We must go deeper.

Of all the heretical views of the atonement none seem to make a stronger appeal to the human reason and heart than what is known as the *moral influence* theory. This may be accounted for, perhaps, on the ground of its apparent exaltation of the love of God—a view that has a most winsome quality. Any view that lays strong emphasis on the love of God is sure to attract much popular applause.

What is this engaging theory of the atonement? It is this, that the life, sufferings, and death of our Lord exhibit the surpassing love of God to man in such a way as to win his affection and stir his conscience. Thus won and convicted, man becomes contrite, repents of his sin and embraces the loving overtures of pardon from the gracious heavenly Father. It is easy to see why this conception is so fascinating to certain classes of people, whose admiration can always be won by a display of beneficence and love.

Is it a view that can be defended on the ground of reason and Scripture? To our mind, a fatal objection to this view is that it makes the sufferings of Christ spectacular. We use the term seriously, and not for the purpose of derision. If there was no real constitutional need for the passion of Christ, no inner necessity; if it was simply an arbitrary method invented by the Almighty for the purpose of displaying His love to man, then what other designation than the word "spectacular" can be applied to the atonement? Now, when Satan tempted Christ by requesting Him to hurl Himself from the pinnacle of the temple for spectacular effect, He refused to do so, saying: "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." There is something repulsive to the human heart, after all, in love making a display of itself merely for the sake of the exhibition or the sensational effect it will produce. Surely, when we come to think of it deeply, the revelation of love is much more effective if the display is rather incidental, while the deed is an actual service done for its own sake. So, if Christ really suffered for us, really saved us by doing something for us that had to be done to accomplish our salvation, how much more potent is the appeal of the exhibition of His sacrifice! But if He suffered merely for the sake of making an exhibition of love, we turn away sadly and whisper under our breath, not wanting to be irreverent, "That display seems like affectation."

Again, the moral influence view makes the atonement a mechanical contrivance, not a real and essential method of getting rid of sin and securing man's salvation. A moment's reflection will make this statement plain. If it was only an artifice for winning man's affection and was not actually necessary in the nature of things, you see clearly that it was only a "fixed up" scheme for compassing a result.

Some other plan might have been devised, but God decided that this was the best one. When you come to think of it seriously and profoundly, do you want to be saved by an expedient? No; the moral influence theory does not go deep enough; it does not touch the essentiality of things.

Another erroneous view is what is known as the *governmental* theory. We permit another to state this view: "It is based upon the absolute sovereignty of God—that He, by virtue of His supreme will alone, can freely and entirely remit the guilt and penalty of sin. The right to relax the law's demands at will belongs to His prerogative as moral governor. But lest this encourage the sinner to transgress with impunity, Christ is allowed to suffer as a warning that sin shall not escape." (Dr. J. B. Remensnyder, "The Atonement and Modern Thought.")\*

The fatal objection to this view is the same as the one brought against the moral influence theory—it is a mechanical device, not a *modus operandi* grounded in ontology. The thought that Christ was punished when it was not really necessary for Him to bear the sinner's penalty is repellent to most minds. We would prefer the view that God relaxed the law's demands. Besides, we can find no Scripture to sustain this hypothesis.

Then what is the true Biblical doctrine of the atonement? First, it includes the fact of vicarious obedience and suffering, or substitution; that is, that Christ suffered in our stead in order that we might be spared the penalty of our transgressions. To our minds, this is clearly the Biblical doctrine. "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we

\* A most excellent work, comprehensive and thoroughly evangelical and written in a lucid style.



like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 5, 6.) If that does not mean that our Redeemer took our place and endured in our stead, it is hard to say what the language means. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) "Christ hath also once suffered for us, the just for the unjust." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Heb. ix. 28.) "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) "The Son of man gave His life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.)

We are well aware that the opponents of the orthodox view try to explain away the substitutional force of these passages, and thereby give them an indefinite meaning; but we do not believe they can break down the clear, direct interpretation of language in that way. Take only one of the citations: "The Son of man gave His life a ransom for many." What do we understand by a ransom? We surely understand that one person must be given in the stead of another, and he must be regarded as a sufficient hostage. If our Lord gave His life a ransom for men, then He must have taken their place that they might be delivered. Any other idea of a ransom is too vague to be entertained.

Moreover, if the doctrine of substitution can be shown to be reasonable—nay, more, if it can be shown to be not unreasonable—there will be no difficulty in grasping the plain meaning of the Bible passages just cited. Is the orthodox view a rational one?



First, the idea of vicarious enduring is not foreign to nature and human life as we know them to-day. "That this law enters into the ethical constitution of the world is shown by the fact that the course of nature rests upon the death of some that others may live, *i. e.*, upon this principle of substitution or transference." \* Says Henry Drummond: "There is no reproduction in plant, animal or man which does not involve sacrifice for others." There is not a parent in the world who does not endure vicarious suffering a hundred times. The sacrifice that a mother makes for her children is lauded the world over; no one seems to think it unjust or irrational; on the other hand, nothing so profoundly stirs the human heart as the story of maternal self-abnegation. One man goes to war for another, and if the substitute goes without money and without price and loses his life in battle, everybody applauds the unselfish and heroic act. The conclusion, therefore, is this—that the idea of vicarious sacrifice is not repugnant *per se* to the reason of mankind. Hence, if the Son of God voluntarily and lovingly took our burden of sin and guilt upon Himself, and really suffered for us and paid our debt, there is no good reason why we should feel an ethical shock, and should not joyfully accept the benefits of the divine and loving immolation. When one man pays another's debt, the beneficiary does not complain that it is unjust for one person to make sacrifice for another; he gladly and gratefully accepts the payment, and is ever after a friend of his benefactor.

However, we frankly admit that we have not yet reached the pith of the objection usually made to the doctrine of substitution; and we must not fight shy of difficulties, if we are going to test orthodoxy by the rational process. The chief gravamen of the object-

\* Remensnyder, in the admirable work previously quoted.

ors is this: How can the innocent justly be made to bear the sin and endure the penalty of the guilty? Is not that unethical? Do we not start back with a shock from the thought? And even if the innocent Redeemer did suffer the penalty of our sins, how could God rightfully, or even juridically, accept the substitution, and clear the guilty parties?

These are serious difficulties, and must be dealt with in a reverent and kindly way, and the barriers to reason and faith must overcome, if it is possible. Perhaps there is a point in the doctrine that must remain a mystery, at least for the present, just as there is something inexplicable about the commonest affairs of life. What we can hope to do, and all we can hope to do, is to show that the evangelical conception is neither unethical nor unreasonable.

Our first remark is that the difficulty referred to did not seem to trouble the apostle Peter, though he did not attempt a philosophical explanation, for he says (1 Pet. iii. 18): "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *the just for the unjust*, that He might bring us to God." And when our Lord declared (Mark x. 45), "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many," He did not seem to be haunted with the thought that it would be unjust for Him, the Innocent One, to suffer and die for the guilty race. Therefore, the trouble is not of the Bible's making, but is a difficulty raised by human speculation.

Next, if it is impossible in any case for the innocent to endure the penal sentence due to the guilty, then no real atonement for man can be made, and man cannot be saved; he must pay his own debt, must suffer his own penalty. Do you ask why? Because it is impossible to conceive that God could simply lay aside His moral law, remit the penalty, forgive the sin, without any reparation, and yet maintain the honor,

dignity, and inviolability of His righteous government. If He did so, it would be such a slight upon the eternal laws that He Himself established, laws that are essential to the upholding of the universe, that even His subjects would cease to fear and respect them. How natural for them to put their thought in this way: "We need not fear to transgress God's laws, for if we do, we need only to repent, and He will waive the whole constitution of the moral universe in our behalf!" In that case we might patently ask why God ever framed a constitution at all!

Therefore, we maintain that, while there may be an insoluble element in the orthodox view, the objectors to that theory encounter a difficulty that is insuperable. Presently we shall have more to say on this point.

Now let us get into the heart of the great enigma: Can it ever be, *per se*, that the innocent can suffer and atone for the sins of the guilty? Still more, can it be that the guilt and penalty will be remitted, and the sinner saved? That brings us to the marrow of the question. Ordinarily such a transference could not rightfully take place. However, you can conceive, without any mental strain, of the following conditions: Suppose that the penalty of a sinful man's wrong-doing were imposed upon an innocent man, who takes it upon himself gladly and voluntarily. Suppose, now, that the guilty man, become conscious of his sin and humbly penitent, voluntarily and joyfully accepts the sacrifice in his behalf, and by accepting it becomes morally changed, a transformed man, a good and holy man, giving his deliverer the gratitude of his heart and the service of his life. Do not stop yet, but suppose, further, that his rescuer, after paying the penalty of the wrong-doer, should be released, then exalted to great joy and honor and glory, and enter into the sweetest fellowship with his morally transformed beneficiary.

Now, in all this transaction can you find anything that is wrong, anything that is unethical, anything that violates an intrinsic law of God and man? We think not. Well, that is precisely what the evangelical view imputes to the atonement wrought out for man by Jesus Christ. While between man and man, such an enactment would be impossible, with God it is not impossible. It violates no ontological regulation. It is not a mechanical stratagem or makeshift. It accords with the nature of things. The whole difficulty vanishes when we remember the morally transforming effect upon the sinner of accepting the atonement, and the subsequent glory of the Saviour Himself. It should always be remembered that when God imputes to the penitent and believing sinner the righteousness of the atoning Saviour, He also imparts regenerating and sanctifying grace to the sinner. Therefore, God can "be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." You see, the heavenly feature of the system is that God imputes righteousness and imparts grace only to those who repent of their sins and accept the atoning sacrifice by faith. The ethical adjustment on God's part effects an ethical transformation in the sinner's condition.

Another serious question raised by the doubter is this: How could Christ in time, indeed, in only a few years, endure the just penalty of millions of people who were sentenced to eternal retribution? There are persons who assert baldly that such a transaction is impossible because it is inconceivable. This difficulty must not be lightly passed over.

The Biblical writers, apparently, had no trouble with this inquiry. Heb. ii. 9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." Put the baldest literalism into your interpre-



tation of this verse you may choose, and you will still be able to exclaim with Nicodemus: "How can these things be?" How could one man taste death for uncounted millions of people? The prophet did not stumble over the problem, for he states categorically: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Listen to Paul (2 Cor. v. 19): "God was in Christ, reconciling the *world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Harken again to the same masterful voice (2 Cor. v. 14, 15): "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if *one died for all, then were all dead*; and that *He died for all*, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again." The refrain is kept up by John (1 John ii. 2, American Revised Version): "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the *whole world*." John the Baptist did not shrink from making the atonement world-wide (John i. 29): "Behold, the Lamb of God that *taketh away the sin of the world*."

In order to make proper atonement it is not necessary that the penalty be enacted in precisely the same way, but simply that an equivalent be rendered. It requires but a moment's thought to see that this is true even in human affairs. If capital punishment is to be administered by the State, it matters not whether it be carried out by hanging, or electrocution, or in any other way that civilized countries may approve. So in the substitutional suffering of our Lord, it was necessary only that He render an equivalent in suffering the punitive sentence pronounced upon the sinful race.

This He was able to do by virtue of the *peculiar nature of His person*. First, Christ was the Son of Man, not the son of a man, but the Son of Man—that is, the Son of Humanity. By virtue of



the incarnation of the eternal and infinite Logos, He was able to take into His own being *all humanity seminally*. Strictly speaking, He did not assume *a* human nature, but *human nature*. Just as all oak-trees were potentially involved in the first acorn, so all humanity was potentially involved in the humanity that the Divine Logos assumed. He was the Federal Head of the human race. Hence when Christ obeyed the law, all humanity in essence obeyed it; when Christ paid the penalty of the transgressions of the race, humanity essentially paid the penalty. Therefore it was Man that suffered the consequences of sin, just as had to be the case, because it was man that had violated the law. This indicates why an incarnation of the Logos was necessary. It was not a makeshift, not an exploit, but an inner necessity. Now, as Christ's human nature included, *seminally*, all human nature, He was able to atone for the sins of the whole human family. Adam led all men into sin; why should not Christ lead them all to salvation? How profound and philosophical, therefore, are the words of Paul when he says (Rom. v. 19): "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

We have not yet fathomed all the depths of our Lord's atoning grace and power. He was not only the Son of Man; He was also the Son of God. He was the Divine-Human Person. This gave to His person an infinite value, and therefore an infinite value to His active and passive obedience. Thus when He obeyed the law for us, it was an infinite righteousness He wrought out; when He received into His person the penalty of transgression, it was an infinite suffering that He endured, making an infinite redemption. Therefore our Saviour rendered an equivalent for human transgression in His atoning work.

Some hint of the comparative value of a man and of the Son of God may be apprehended by remembering of how much more value the life of a man is than that of any member of the lower creation. While we slaughter animals with impunity for the purpose of sustaining human life, the man who ruthlessly takes another man's life must, in many of the States, suffer a death penalty. All we need to remember to make the comparison effective is that Christ was God as well as man. It is the conjunction of the divine with the human in the person of Christ that gives to all His acts an infinite value.

Several other elements enter vitally into the redeeming work of our High Priest to make it complete. They are expiation, satisfaction, and propitiation. The expiation works the satisfaction, and the satisfaction effects the propitiation. When expiation has been made for sin, the justice of God is satisfied and propitiated, so that God's mercy and pardon can flow down unhindered upon the sinner, providing he accepts them.

In the foregoing discussion it has been shown that the idea of vicarious expiation is not repugnant to reason; also that Christ, being both God and man, could make complete atonement—or what is the same thing, expiation—for the sins of the human race. It now remains to be seen why expiation was necessary. At this point, issue must again be taken with the opponents of the evangelical view, for they aver that no reparation for a broken law was needed, but that God could simply forgive out of pure love. All He needs to do is to lay aside His anger and justice and let His love flow unimpeded from His fatherly heart.

That is an easy way, apparently, and appeals to sentiment; but it is superficial. It does not take into account the nature of a moral government. Suppose a judge, touched by the tears of the criminal at the

bar, should simply remit the crime and allow the offender to go unpunished, how could good order and good government be maintained in the State? That is a point that cannot be passed over so readily and glibly in our effort to bring the plan of salvation before the bar of reason.

Let it be remembered at this juncture that God wants His love to flow out freely toward sinners; that divine love is the source and foundation of the atonement; that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." However, if God is to remain God, the God of holiness, His love must go out to His creatures in righteous ways. He dare not do wrong, dare not violate His own laws of righteousness, even though the object be to pardon and save the sinner. No! God will not save man at all, if He cannot save him righteously; for that would vitiate the whole moral government of the universe. No one can fail to see that one error, one wrong act on God's part, would hurl the universe to ruin. That, we take it, is the reason God would not save man without the atonement, without satisfaction; it was demanded by the exigencies of God's nature and the constitution of a moral government. Reflect for a moment. What kind of a transaction would that be which would endeavor to rescue man from sin to righteousness by violating the law of righteousness? To put it more aptly, if possible, could God effect an ethical salvation by employing unethical means?

Now God's law had been violated by man's disobedience. Justice, an infinite attribute of God—an attribute, too, that holds His character in perfect moral balance—demands that the sinner be punished. If the sinner is to be spared, it can be only because the requirements of justice can rightly be met in some other way than by the transgressor's punishment. We have shown that Christ could rightfully and right-

ously suffer the penalty in man's stead, thus making complete satisfaction to justice and permitting God's mercy to flow in an unobstructed and ethical channel upon man. Justice was not waived aside to let mercy past; no, its demands were fully satisfied so that it could join with mercy in seeking man's reclamation. Indeed, it would have been *unjust* not to save man after expiation had been made. To our mind, this plan seems to be not only infinitely wise and beneficent, but also necessary in the very nature of things.

Had God set justice violently aside, He would have thrown contempt on His own laws; had He done that, He could not have expected His rational creatures to respect them. Thus He would have subverted the ends of His government. However, the course that God pursued proves to all His intelligent creatures that He has supreme regard for His own laws, that He will maintain His government in righteousness, and that, therefore, His commandments cannot be broken with impunity. True, you may obtain a view of the majesty and inviolability of God's law amidst the thundering and lightning of Mount Sinai; but you will be still more impressed with its sacred character if you will behold the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son on Calvary. The reasoning is this: If punitive justice was visited upon God's beloved Son to make expiation for the broken law, how diligently should we keep that law! If God honors His own law, He may rightly expect angels and men to honor it, too. Besides, men will always respect a God who is sturdy, firm, and erect in His uprightness; they could not respect a God who was impelled by mere sentiment.

There are people who misinterpret the orthodox view in this way—they declare its teaching to be that God's anger had to be placated by the immolation of His Son. They seem to think that we look upon God



as a vindictive being, whose resentment had to be appeased in some way; and so, instead of wreaking it upon man, He wreaked it upon Christ. No intelligent evangelical thinker ever harbored such a barbarous conception. It is simply a man of straw. We do not believe that God hates anybody, however much He may dislike men's sins. He hates sin, but loves the sinner, loves him so much that He sent His only begotten Son into the world to save the guilty. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The satisfaction that was rendered in the atoning work of our Lord was made to the eternal principle of justice; not to the sentiment of anger and acerbity. The expiation was of such a character that the demands of justice were fully met, God's government was upheld in righteousness, and an unobstructed channel opened for the descent of God's mercy and grace upon the penitent sinner. Well may it be said that on the cross "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Man is *happily* saved because he is *ethically* saved.

When the Scriptures speak of the wrath of God, they mean His just anger against sin, which is the only thing in His universe that He hates.

And such righteous indignation is entirely in accord with the holy nature of God. Suppose that sin did not stir His indignation, what kind of a God would He be? A God who is indifferent to sin, who has no emotion regarding it, cannot be the God who rules a universe of love and law like the one which we inhabit. How could it then be said: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne"? (Ps. xcvi. 2, American Revised Version.)

In Dr. Heinrich Schmid's "Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," American translation, there is so admirable a statement of the phil-



osophy of the scheme of redemption that we are fain to quote it:

"If the wrath of God, which rests upon men on account of their sins, together with all its consequences, is just and holy, then it is not compatible with God's justice and holiness that He should forgive men their sins absolutely and without punishment, and lay aside all wrath, together with its consequences; not compatible with His justice, for this demands that he hold a relation to sinners different from that He holds toward the godly, and that He decree punishment for the former; not with His holiness, for in virtue of this He hates the evil; finally, it is not compatible with His truth, for He has already declared that He will punish those who transgress His holy law. If God, therefore, under the impulse of His love to men, is still to assume once more a gracious relation to them, something must first occur that can enable Him to do this without derogating from His justice and holiness; the guilt that men have brought upon themselves by their sins must be removed, a ransom must be paid, an equivalent must be rendered for the offense that has been committed against God; or, what amounts to the same thing, satisfaction must be rendered.

"Now, as it is impossible for men to render this, we must extol it as a special act of divine mercy that God has made it possible through Christ, so that He might render this satisfaction in our stead. In Him, namely, who is God and man, by virtue of this union of the two natures in one person, everything that He accomplishes in His human nature has infinite value; while every effort put forth by a mere man has only restricted and temporary value.

"Although, therefore, a mere man cannot accomplish anything of sufficient extent and value to remove the infinite guilt that rests upon the human race, and atone for past transgressions; yet Christ can

do this, because everything He does and suffers as man is not simply the doing and suffering of a mere man, but to what He does there is added the value and significance of a divine, and, therefore, an infinite work, in virtue of the union of the divine and the human natures, and their consequent communion; so that, therefore, there can proceed from Him an act of infinite value which He can set over against the infinite guilt of man, and therefore remove this guilt. In Christ, the God-man, there is therefore entire ability to perform such a work, and in Him there is also the will to do it.

"A twofold work, however, is to be accomplished. The first thing to be effected is that God cease to regard men as those who have not complied with the demands of the holy Law. This is done when He who is to render the satisfaction so fulfills the entire law in the place of men that He does that which man had failed to do. Then it must be brought about that guilt no longer rests upon men for which they deserve punishment; and this is accomplished when He who is rendering satisfaction for men takes the punishment upon Himself. Both of these things Christ has done; the first by His *active obedience* (which consisted in the most perfect fulfillment of the law), for thereby He, who in His own person was not subject to the law, fulfilled the law in the place of man; the second by His *passive obedience* (which consisted in the all-sufficient payment of the penalties that were awaiting us), for thereby He suffered what men should have suffered, and so He took upon Himself their punishment, and atoned for their sins in their stead.

"Through this manifestation of obedience to the divine decree in both these respects, Christ rendered, in the place of man, a satisfaction fully sufficient and available for all the sins of all men, to the praise of divine justice and mercy, and for the procurement of our justification and salvation."

Nothing need be added to this clear and comprehensive statement of the evangelical conception of the atonement. However, an objection may here occur to some minds. Does not this view exalt the divine justice and give it precedence over the divine love? The reverse is the case. True, in our discussion more has, perhaps, been said about justice and righteousness than about love, but that is because the objections have been of such a character as to make necessary the vindication of the justice of God, which the advocates of the moral influence theory are apt to overlook entirely, forgetting that justice, like love, is an infinite divine attribute. It remains to be said that, while we dare not say over-confidently that one infinite attribute takes precedence over another, yet it would seem to us that divine love is the fountain from which the plan of redemption sprung. Indeed, in view of man's sin, it was divine love joined with divine wisdom that found the heavenly method of sparing man and at the same time satisfying the claims of justice. The idea is not that God was primarily bent on satisfying justice, but that His first and ultimate purpose was righteously to satisfy justice *in order that He might save man*. Hence it is forever true that "He first loved us." It was love that found the way. It was warm, full, free, pulsating, celestial love—but not sentimental love. Hence it was love that wrought side by side and hand in hand with eternal righteousness.

It will not be time and effort spent in vain to try to clear up another difficulty that the skeptical world is apt to find in the scheme of redeeming grace. It is this—that Christ's death on the cross did not, after all, save us from bodily dissolution; we still have to pay the "debt of nature." That is true. Death still reigns in the earth for reasons, no doubt, that approve themselves to God. But Christ's atonement does save

us from eternal physical as well as spiritual death, for at the final day of judgment our bodies shall be resurrected and glorified and enter upon a career of everlasting honor and glory. Thus it is proved that Christ did save us from death in every phase. Man is to be wholly saved, through the work and merits of redeeming grace.

We observe, too, that reconciliation between God and man is effected by the atonement. First, man's heart is won by the display of love on the part of both Father and Son; also by the fact that this adjustment secures man's salvation in an ethical way, without derogation of the moral government of the universe; by the fact, in addition, that the method of atonement was not merely a mechanical and artificial device, but a real, vital, organic procedure—the only way by which redemption could have been wrought. Then, there is a sense in which God was also reconciled; not that His anger had to be appeased or placated; no! no! but that His justice, having been outraged and His righteous laws trampled upon, juridical satisfaction had to be rendered before God's mercy could have a free channel in which to flow down to man the sinner. This, we think, agrees with the whole analogy of faith regarding the doctrine of reconciliation. When we reach heaven, we shall be able to laud both the love and the justice of God. That will be salvation indeed.



## IX

### THE NEW BIRTH: WHY NECESSARY?

It might be thought at first blush that if Christ made atonement for our sins, then rose from the dead, ascended to God's right hand, was glorified, and now comes into direct contact with man in His ubiquitous theanthropic person, that is all that would be necessary for man's complete redemption, and therefore that the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration would be superfluous. Why, in addition to atoning mercy, is regenerating grace needed for man's recovery? In other words, why must man be born again?

Presently we shall give some practical reasons why such spiritual re-making is necessary, but just now we are concerned with its fundamental necessity—its necessity in the very nature of things. First, then, since God is a Trinity, and the Father and the Son have so prominent a share in man's redemption, it would be only rational to infer that the Holy Spirit would also have some part in this beneficent work. What is that part, and is it fundamentally essential? It surely is, and from the following consideration: After the atonement was made by the incarnate Logos, and He had ascended to God's right hand, justice was satisfied, the government of God was upheld in righteousness, and therefore all obstructions were removed, so that the grace of God could be poured forth freely upon man for his recovery. Right at that juncture something was necessary before our Redeemer in His glorified theanthropic person could come into vital contact with sinful man—with man who was "dead



in trespasses and sins." Since man's spirit is the center of his ethical being, the very life of his life, and since salvation is pre-eminently an ethical transaction, it stands to reason that he must be spiritually awakened and enlightened in order to receive and apprehend the things of Christ and accept Him by faith. Right there is the juncture where the work of the Holy Spirit is needed—to create the new life. And why can the Spirit only perform this blessed function? Because man must be touched and awakened in his inmost spiritual life, in the very depths of his being, the holy of holies in his soul, and therefore that subsistence of the Holy Trinity known as the Holy Spirit must compass that work. Our Lord Himself told His disciples that the Paraclete would come and do a work that He Himself was unable to do. While all the persons of the Trinity work together for the accomplishment of every object, yet there are points where each has His distinctive function to perform. Note, now, when man has been re-born by God's Spirit, operating through the means of grace, particularly the Word and Baptism, he is in an ethical state of soul to accept Christ's atoning sacrifice as the ground of his justification and Christ Himself as his Redeemer and Friend. Then the mystical union has been effected, and man is on his way to complete glorification through contact with Christ. Had not the Holy Spirit first imparted life to the sinner, Christ would have attached Himself to a spiritual corpse, if He had come in contact with man at all. Thus it will be seen that God, in devising a plan for man's moral and physical recovery, has established vital contact at every successive point. There are no gaps, no cleavages, in the blessed work of redeeming grace from beginning to end. All is vitalized; all organic.

Moreover, in performing the function of implanting the new life in man's soul, the Holy Spirit is consist-

ently doing the work in the world's history that pertains to His office. Originally, He brooded over the face of the deep, implanting the seeds of primordial life on the earth, the originator of physical vitality; then when the Logos was to be incarnated, the Holy Spirit entered into the Virgin Mary's being and produced the conception of the divine-human life of our Lord; lastly He enters into man's soul, and establishes the new life of salvation, making man a new creature in Christ Jesus.

In the next place, let us look at some of the practical aspects of the new birth, to see whether it cannot in many ways be justified on the ground of reason. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and heard about the doctrine of the new birth, he was greatly mystified. He could not understand what Christ meant by being "born again." This leads us to observe that Nicodemus was an educated man. He had doubtless attended the best schools of the land, had perhaps sat at the feet of teachers like Hillel and Gamaliel, was instructed in the Old Testament, and had become a member of the celebrated Jewish Sanhedrim. Our Lord Himself called him a "master in Israel." Yet in spite of his culture, he was sorely puzzled over Christ's teachings about the new birth, exclaiming: "How can these things be?"

This leads to another observation: A man may have a vast amount of secular knowledge, may be, indeed, a very savant, and yet may not be able to recite the rudiments of the spiritual life. It is sad to think about—that a man may be a sage in earthly knowledge and scarcely an abecedarian in heavenly lore. Some one has put it rather poetically, but none the less truthfully, in the following way, which we state in our own language: A man may be a great botanist, able to name all the trees and plants and flowers of garden, field, and woodland, and yet may not be able

to find the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. A man may be a learned geologist, able to name all the various strata of the earth's formation, and classify all the rocks and fossils, and yet may not be able to take his stand on the Rock of Ages. A man may be an erudite astronomer, exploring the heavens with his telescope, giving names to all the stars, planets, and constellations, discoursing learnedly about their character and movements, and yet he may not be able to discover the Star of Bethlehem. Once again, a man may be a profound mathematician, able to solve the most difficult and complicated problems, and yet may not be competent to solve the problem of how much it will profit a man to gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul.

All of which proves that spiritual things cannot be apprehended and discovered by the unaided intellectual faculties. Education and culture have their place and their use, and a noble vocation is theirs; but it was never intended that they should usurp the teaching of the Spirit of God, or render that tutelage unnecessary. Christ was simply stating an elemental truth when He said to Nicodemus: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." No less fundamental is the teaching of the apostle, who says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In making these statements Christ and Paul were not making arbitrary asseverations, but were simply averring what is true in the very nature of things.

Now, this is the *raison d'être* of the new birth. It might be asked, Why is the birth from above necessary? The only answer that can be given is this, Because it is. Why is it necessary to eat, drink and breathe in order to live? Simply and solely because

human life is so constituted. The same categorical statement is to be made relative to the necessity of the new birth. By his natural birth, man comes into being without the true knowledge of God, in what we call the natural or carnal, or, if you please, the depraved state; and in order to be brought into the right relation with God, he must have another birth, a spiritual birth. If conditions are fair, he may make a pretty good natural man without this added spiritual endowment; but he cannot be a spiritual son of God. Not only does the Bible teach this doctrine explicitly, but experience has corroborated it in thousands of concrete cases. Men have gone on for years in spiritual darkness; then the light of God shone into their minds and they became new creatures in Christ, with new knowledge, new affections, new aspirations, new hopes. When the Psalmist prayed: "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," he knew what he was talking about; because he knew that, until God should open his soul's eyes, he would be blind to spiritual truth.

Some years ago an unbeliever, much given to derision of the Christian system, made sport of the Bible because it taught that a man "wasn't born right the first time, and so had to be born again!" Such ridicule simply advertised the superficial thinking of the giber, as well as the shallow nature of his study of mankind. Cannot everyone see that there is something amiss with man in his natural state? How else will you account for the universal wickedness of the world? Is it because men are simply willfully perverse? No, it must be because there is something inherently wrong with the constitution of human nature. Besides, every man who is honest with himself must realize in his own consciousness that there is moral discord in his own heart. He knows that he is not in complete harmony with himself, with his sur-



roundings, or with God. All of which simply proves that man is not born right the first time, and that, therefore, he must be born again. No; the new birth is not an arbitrary arrangement; it is a constitutional necessity.

In nature we have the law of biogenesis—the law that life can come only from antecedent life. So far as scientists have carried their researches there is no exception to this law. The same law obtains in the spiritual world—that is, spiritual life can proceed only from antecedent spiritual life, which must first be implanted by the Spirit of God.

The doctrine and experience of regeneration have been surrounded with such an atmosphere of awfulness, almost of terror, that many persons shrink from it with fear. Regeneration should not be looked upon as something "awful." While we cannot understand the mystery of it, any more than we can understand the mystery of anything else, whether in the physical or spiritual realm; yet the fact itself is comparatively simple, natural in the best sense of the term, and sweetly reasonable.

In the first place, why should coming to God be regarded as something terrible, something adapted to frighten the soul? Does not the Bible call Him "our Father?" Is there anything very frightful about the child coming to its earthly father even for forgiveness? Perhaps the highest type of human love is the love of a mother, so gentle, so clement, so forgiving. Yet God is represented as more loving even than a mother, for the Scripture says that a mother may forget her child, but God will not forget us. Suppose the child has committed a wrong against his mother. His conscience upbraids him, and he feels penitent. Is it something terrible to go to his mother and say: "Mother, I did wrong; I'm sorry; will you forgive me?" Is there anything more natural and



reasonable than that? And must the child go down on his knees, and moan and weep and call at the top of his voice to make his mother hear, and must he continue his supplications for days and nights? No, indeed! Scarcely has he uttered the first broken syllable of contrition before the mother puts her arms about his neck, and kisses away his tears, and breathes her forgiveness into his ear. Now, if God is more affectionate and lenient than a mother, ought it to be looked upon as something terrifying for the contrite sinner to come to Him for pardon? It would seem to be a comparatively simple act.

We should remember, too, that God wants to forgive us. He is many, many times more willing and anxious to forgive us than we are to be forgiven. Do you ask for the proof of this? He gave His only begotten Son for that express purpose—that He might be able to forgive us without doing violence to the law of righteousness. Now, if He gave His only Son that He might forgive us, does not that prove that He is exceedingly desirous of bestowing pardon upon us? And if He wants to forgive us, would it not be a strange paradox if, when we come to Him for pardon, He would refuse to grant it?

The method sometimes employed for securing the conversion of sinners conveys the impression that God is hard to persuade, that He is all but deaf to the sinner's petitions, that you must call loudly to make Him hear, and must continue to agitate and supplicate a long time to convince Him that He should redeem His promise of pardon and grace. All of this creates and strengthens the popular idea that God is stern and unloving, far away, almost inaccessible. This is not the Biblical conception of God's disposition, for He is represented in the Scriptures as "ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy;" "long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all

should come to repentance." To come to God, therefore, and expect to have to argue with Him, and persuade Him, and convince Him by vociferous and long-continued supplication, to forgive and regenerate us, is something more than a mere "work of supererogation;" it is a virtual questioning of His goodness, doubting His veracity, making our way hard through our misconception of His loving kindness. How much better to come to Him simply, quietly, trustfully, and say: "Father, I have sinned; forgive me," and then believe that He does forgive, because He promises that He will. God wants to be trusted; He wants to be believed.

True, sometimes the sinner has to struggle. But let it be remembered that the struggle is with himself, not with God. God often, no doubt, permits the struggle to go on for awhile, till the penitent sinner comes to the point when He sees that all his prayers and agitation cannot bring the answer or merit the grace, but that he must simply trust God, surrender to Him, believe His word and promise of pardon.

Perhaps the simplicity of the new birth might be illustrated from the natural world in connection with a human act. For if, as the Bible teaches, man is made in the image of God, we may expect man to do some things in God's way. Suppose you want to have a garden of choice vegetables and flowers. After the soil has been prepared you would not allow it to lie idle and grow up in weeds. You would plant the proper kinds of seeds in the tilth, and presently they would germinate and grow, and soon you would have a garden after your own idea. Now the human heart is a moral garden. Naturally it is wild and uncultivated, a good deal grown up with weeds. If it is to be converted into a garden for God and spiritual fruitage, the soil must first be prepared by repentance, contrition and faith; then God must deposit in it the seeds

of the spiritual life, which must be encouraged to grow up into the fruition of a rich and ripe Christian character. Looked at in the light of that illustration, the new birth seems to be a simple and natural process.

The experience of regeneration may be illustrated in another way. You will remember the Bible story of man's creation—how God first formed his body out of the finest material of the ground, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Something after that order takes place in a man's regeneration. First, there is the natural man—but the Scriptures represent him as “dead in trespasses and sin.” What must be done to vitalize him spiritually? God by His Spirit must breathe into his soul the breath of the new life, so that he may become a new creature. This illustration is all the more apposite because our Lord likens the process of the new birth to the operation of the wind, which “bloweth where it listeth.” Nothing to terrorize about the doctrine and experience of regeneration! It is all simply natural and sweetly reasonable.

Our next thought is—we should not stumble over the mystery of the birth from above. You remember what Christ said to Nicodemus when the latter was puzzling over the incomprehensible character of the new birth, exclaiming, “How can these things be?” Christ said to him: “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” And then He drew an analogy from the wind, which Nicodemus could not understand, either. Do not let the mystery of it be a stumbling-block to your faith.

There are people who do not want to accept spiritual facts because they are mysterious. They say they cannot believe in God because they cannot see Him, feel Him, comprehend Him. They cannot believe in spirit because they can form no conception as to what

spirit is. We would ask whether they know what *matter* is. If they do, it might be well for them to step forward and enlighten the world by saying just what matter is. When it comes to the ultimate analysis, no one knows what material substance is, any more than he knows what spiritual substance is. Not the wisest philosopher in the world can give a definition of matter.

True, it is said that matter is composed of atoms. But what is an atom? Does anybody know? Has anybody ever seen an atom? No! not even with the most powerful microscope. More than that, can anybody form a conception of an atom? It is said that an atom is the smallest possible particle of matter, so small and so constituted that it cannot be made any smaller. Can you form any idea of a particle of matter so small and so constructed that it cannot be halved and quartered and still further subdivided? No, you cannot. It is beyond human conception. The atomic theory of matter is simply an hypothesis. Probably it is the true explanation of matter; at least, it is the best working hypothesis that has yet been devised, and will probably be generally accepted as long as it helps to explain more phenomena than any other theory. Yet it must be remembered that only recently there have risen certain scientific gentlemen of learning and sincerity who have questioned the atomic and molecular theory of matter.

Now, if we cannot comprehend the ultimate nature of so common a thing as the material substance around us, of which our bodies are composed, why should we reject a spiritual experience, because, forsooth, we cannot understand what spirit is?

Look at the fine imagery with which our Lord illustrated the new birth to His skeptical hearer, Nicodemus. He said: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell



whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." What a profound and suggestive simile! Who can understand ultimately what the wind is, the reason and process of its peculiar phenomena? No one, not even the most learned meteorologist. Of course, according to the popular idea, it is composed of atoms and molecules. But what are they? No one knows. Nor is that all. How can atoms and molecules, which must be solid substances, move about so buoyantly, so facilely, so rhythmically pliant to the lightest touch and influence? How can these things be? Does anybody understand it? Nobody does. How can atoms and molecules be so combined and related as to make a gaseous or a liquid substance? No one can explain it. No one knows why wind blows, or water flows, or light shines, or heat warms. Oh! we are simply enveloped in mysteries in the natural world. We need not go outside of that realm to find insoluble problems.

The scientists have analyzed the atmosphere chemically, and inform us that it is composed of three elements—about one-fifth oxygen, four-fifths nitrogen, and four one-hundredths per cent. of carbon dioxide. But what are oxygen and nitrogen and carbon dioxide? Has anybody ever seen them or analyzed them? No one has. They are scientific terms to cover our ignorance. We know something about their phenomena, just as we know something about the phenomena of spiritual entities, but of their real substance we know absolutely nothing. It is almost as if God had drawn a veil over the nature of elemental substance, and had said, "Thus far and no farther!"

Now, let us come to the application of the parable. We do not refuse to breathe the atmosphere because we cannot understand it; nor to drink water because we do not understand it; nor to eat bread because we



do not understand all about the processes of fermentation and baking; nor to ride on the trolley car because we do not know whether electricity is a substance or merely a force; nor to think because we cannot grasp the connection between nerve impression and mental perception. No! we are not so dull as that! Then why should we decline to accept spiritual realities because we cannot comprehend them in the ultimate analysis? We need not understand the air; we need only to breathe it. We need not understand the water; we need only to drink. So we need not understand the new birth; *we need only to experience it!*

Those who have experienced it do not profess to understand it, for intellectually they are no wiser than their friends who have not been born again. Our only claim is that they have had the experience, and therefore "know whereof they speak." Having "tasted and seen (experienced) that the Lord is good," they simply cannot disclaim something that has been so happily impinged upon their consciousness. Do not marvel, therefore, because our Redeemer said unto you: "Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." This is not exhortation; it is logic.

Another thought on the heavenly birth seems to be worthy of presentation at this point. It is this: There are diversities of operation, but the same Spirit. We mean by this statement that, while all persons must be born again, the experience of the new birth does not come to all in the same way. All must be converted, but the details are not all alike. This is also a natural law in the spiritual world, for in nature there is continual diversity, yet it is always the same nature, the same principle, giving unity to all the infinite variety.

To illumine our thought let us dwell upon the beautiful analogy of our great Teacher when He compared the spiritual birth to the wind. The wind does not always blow the same. Sometimes it blows a gale, a cyclone, a tornado, that sweeps across hill and plain like a besom of devastation. Have you ever experienced such a storm either on sea or land? Well, it causes some sudden and violent transformations, does it not?

Do you not believe that there are such experiences in the spiritual realm—sudden, transforming, revolution—ary? No doubt there are. And those of us who believe more strongly in the quieter and soberer methods of conversion ought not, after all, to question the genuineness of regenerations that come through a spiritual tempest. There is pretty strong Scriptural warrant for the sudden and revolutionary species of conversion. There was the apostle Paul. As he was traveling with his comrades to Damascus, he was carrying letters of authority for the arrest of the disciples of Christ, against whom he was breathing out threatenings and was exceedingly angry. Suddenly a light shone round about him, and he fell to the earth, and an accusing voice came from the sky. Listen to the first word of the bitter persecutor: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Pretty sudden, was it not? Rather cyclonic! Then blinded, he went to Damascus, and three days later, when Ananias came to him and baptized him, the scales fell from his eyes, and he saw. In a few days the proud Pharisee had become a humble disciple of the Nazarene. Rather sudden and revolutionary! Rather evident that a spiritual tornado had struck him! Do you doubt the genuineness of Paul's conversion? He had no trouble in saying "just when and where he was converted."

So to-day there are thousands upon thousands of Christians who have had, in their degree, a like ex-

perience. In a season of religious awakening their consciences were aroused, they went to God in prayer, and the divine breath was blown with some suddenness upon them. They know the "place and the hour" of their conversion. And there are people who never would have been converted if they had not been thus suddenly and impressively arrested in their sinful course. We have no right to call in question the sincerity of their motives or the reality of their conversion, provided they bring forth in their lives afterwards "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Even Pentecost was rather cyclonic in its coming, for the sacred record says: "And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

That is one phase of the diversity of the Spirit's operation. However, there are other phases. The wind does not always blow a gale or a cyclone. No doubt you are rather glad of it, too—rather glad that cyclones are of comparatively rare occurrence. As a rule, the wind comes in a light breeze or a gentle zephyr. Do you deny the reality of the breeze because it is not a tempest? Of a truth, is not your consciousness of a breeze just as clear as your consciousness of a tempest and at the same time more desirable and less perilous? Is it not the general and the normal method of the wind's action, while the storm is exceptional and extraordinary?

Do you not believe that thousands of true Christians have been converted by a spiritual zephyr? The Spirit of God blew gently into their hearts, assuring them of His pardon and love. No doubt there are many people who came into this experience when they were so young that they cannot remember the time of its advent. They know that they love Christ, that He saves them by His grace, that the divine Spirit

bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God; but they cannot tell just when and where this heavenly experience began. Perhaps it was at their mother's knee when she taught them to lisp their evening prayer and told them that Jesus was their Friend and Saviour. Then they gave Him their hearts, and He imparted His grace to them, and they never lost the precious gift. Why not? Have not many of our most valuable human experiences come into our lives in that quiet, unobtrusive, undemonstrative way? It is not necessary to remember when and where you were saved, in order to be saved. Thousands of breezes have fanned your cheeks, but you cannot remember them all; cannot remember the first one. Of course, if you have ever been struck by a cyclone, you will be likely to remember the "time and place" distinctly. But such an experience is not necessary to a good and wholesome physical and psychological life. Neither is a cyclonic conversion essential to a true spiritual life.

Someone may put this question: "Is it possible for a person to know his heavenly Father, and yet not remember the first time he met Him?" Yes, that surely is possible. How many people remember the first time they met their earthly fathers? Yet they are conscious of the acquaintance, and just as keenly so as if they could remember the first meeting.

Awhile ago we cited Paul's experience as an example of the cyclonic and revolutionary kind of conversion. But not all Biblical experiences were Pauline. Paul is the broad-minded apostle who told us about the "diversities of operations, but the same Spirit." There was Timothy. Did he experience a cyclone in his conversion? Nay; the apostle Paul himself writes to Timothy: "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and



that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (American Revised Version.) A zephyr-like conversion! To-day there are many Timothean as well as many Pauline conversions.

And we are wondering whether the zephyr-like conversions are not, after all, the normal course of spiritual experiences, while the cyclonic ones are what might be called "necessary evils." Paul was a wicked unbeliever and persecutor, and on that account he had to be struck hard and suddenly. It is when people grow up in sin and stray far from God, that they must be arrested by something extraordinary, to bring them to their knees and rivet conviction on their consciences. Would not this rather be the normal course? To baptize the children in their infancy, implanting in their hearts the seeds or potencies of the regenerate life; then nurture them in such a way in the home and in the church, that at the earliest period of consciousness they would learn about Christ, and give their hearts to him, and accept His love; then by prayer and teaching nurture the grace implanted until it grows up into a ripe and fruitful Christian character. Surely that would be better than to allow them to grow up in sin and disobedience and then expect a great wave of revival to come along and sweep them into the kingdom. Surely it is not right to make the revival a substitute for careful and painstaking parental and pastoral training.

Let it be remembered that this view does not mean that all persons must not be "born again." Christ said, "Ye must be born again," and, "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But who will say that infants cannot be regenerated in baptism, and then come into the experience of conversion at the very dawn of consciousness?



Here an incident comes to mind. A good many years ago a series of special meetings was going on in a town in one of our Middle States. Many persons were coming to Christ. The interest grew so intense that meetings for the interchange of Christian fellowship were held in the forenoon, while the larger meetings for the unconverted were held in the evening. At the day meetings some thrilling experiences were related. One after another of the converts rose and told how and when the experience had come. One had been converted out in the field as he knelt upon the snow; another in the barn as he knelt upon the fodder; a woman had suddenly felt her burden too great to bear, and had dropped on her knees by her bedside and had lifted her heart to God in prayer, and presently the blessing came. Thus the chorus rang, and tears of joy flowed down almost every cheek.

By and by a saintly old mother in Israel arose. Everybody who knew her had confidence in her piety. She had lived the kind of a life that carries its own evidence on the face of it. She had reared a large family, and all of them had come into the church, and her grandchildren were now coming. Her testimony that day was in substance as follows: "My brethren and sisters, it has made my heart beat joyfully to hear your testimonies; to hear how God came and spoke the word of peace to your souls. I have been especially happy to listen to the experiences of those who have just given themselves to Christ and His service. I am glad that the witness in their hearts is so clear and joyful. However, in one respect my experience has not been precisely like that of some of you who have spoken. I cannot tell just the time and place of my conversion; for"—and then her face shone with a radiance that was heavenly—"for I cannot remember the time when I did not love

Jesus!" It was enough. Everyone in the congregation believed her. They would no more have thought of doubting her conversion than their own, even if the experience did not come in quite the same way. Diversities of operation, but the same Spirit!

Perhaps someone asks how the celestial birth is to be secured. Suppose we feel that the breath of God has never come into our hearts. Go back to Christ's own imagery—that of the wind. If you were in a close room, with insufficient air, and you felt that you were suffocating, what would you do if you had the power? You surely would hasten to the window, fling it open, thrust your head out into the pure air of heaven, and breathe in the life-giving ozone.

A picture that of the method of obtaining the regenerating grace of God. You must go to the heavenly atmosphere, to Him who will breathe it upon you. Who dispenses the Spirit? You remember the words of John the Baptist, who declared: "I indeed baptize you with water; but He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." That is all the instruction that the inquiring soul needs—go to Jesus Christ in earnest prayer, firmly believing, and He will breathe into your heart the breath of life. The impartation of spiritual life is the birth from above.

## X

### CHRIST'S RESURRECTION: ITS ULTIMATE PURPOSE

MANY persons seem to have vague ideas of the real purpose of the resurrection of Christ's body. For instance, it is often alleged that we need a living Saviour; that a dead Saviour would be no Redeemer at all; therefore Christ rose from the dead. But even without the resuscitation of Christ's corporeal nature we should have had a living Lord, for His spirit, which never could have perished, would still have ascended to the right hand of God to make intercession for men. We should remember that Christ was truly human as well as divine, and human experience is this: the body returns to the dust from which it sprang, the spirit to God who gave it. Hence the ultimate purpose of Christ's resurrection could not have been to furnish a Saviour who was spiritually alive, but one who was physically alive as well.

Our Lord's resurrection is sometimes spoken of as the procuring cause of the eternal blessedness conferred on the spiritual part of our nature; that is, because Christ rose from the dead and ascended bodily to heaven, therefore when we die our spirits shall ascend to heaven to live forever with God. We do not think this reasoning either Scriptural or logical. Why? Because in His spirit Christ suffered for the redemption of our spirits, and therefore, had His body remained in the sepulchre, He would still have made atonement for our spirits; and by virtue of His spirit's ascension to heaven, our spirits, too, would have cleaved the sky and found their way to God's

right hand. Had God's plan of redemption included only the saving of men's souls there would have been no need of the revivification of Christ's body.

Sometimes the resurrection of Christ is spiritualized. It is said to be typical of man's regeneration—of His rising from spiritual death into spiritual life. And we have even heard it applied to man's progressive sanctification, the similitude being that as Christ rose from the dead physically, so we should rise every day from a lower to a higher plane of spiritual grace, making every day an Easter day in religious advancement. This is proper and beautiful as an illustration, and has Scriptural warrant, too, for the apostle Paul makes similar use of it in the sixth chapter of Romans: "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. . . . For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

While this is indeed a beautiful and impressive figure, it should be remembered that it is only a figure, an analogy. The apostle is well aware of this, for he says that "we have been planted together in the *likeness* of His death." He does not mean, therefore, to argue that the resurrection of Jesus is the procuring cause of man's spiritual life and sanctification.

No doubt one of the purposes of our Lord's resurrection—and a very important one—was to furnish conclusive evidence to His disciples of His messiahship and divinity. A more convincing miracle could

not have been performed than that of our Lord's resurrection by His own power. Assured that it really had occurred, the apostles could not for a moment doubt that Jesus was all that He had professed to be before His death. And this miracle had its intended effect on the hearts of the first disciples, who received through it such an access of faith that their last doubts seem to have been overcome. Even skeptical Thomas became a believer. Ever afterwards the apostles appealed to the resurrection as the climacteric proof of the Lordship of Christ.

Yet we cannot believe that the ultimate design of Christ's resurrection was its evidential value. That was only its temporary purpose. Had it not been an essential factor in the sublime scheme of redemption, the miracle of the resurrection would hardly have been performed merely to convince our Lord's followers of His divine claims, for some other miracle just as convincing might have been performed. It might be said that the evidential value of the resurrection was God's temporary and collateral purpose.

What was the real and ultimate meaning of that first Easter morning—its essential purpose in the scheme of redeeming love? Our reply is this: The resurrection of Christ's body was and is the procuring cause of the redemption of our bodies and the restitution of the fallen world of nature. And this proposition we shall proceed to establish.

Had Christ not risen from the dead, our spirits might still have been redeemed through the vicarious sufferings of His spiritual nature and its restoration to the heavenly realm; but in that case man's body would never have been raised from the tomb; man would not have been "all immortal." His corporeal organism would have had no eternal destiny. Satan, who brought bodily death as well as spiritual wreckage into the world, would have gained that much of



a victory, at least—the eternal separation of the human soul and body and the eternal dissolution of the latter.

Now when we regard the whole teaching of the Sacred Scriptures, we see that God had an eternal, and not merely a temporary, purpose in making man a dual being, physical as well as spiritual. Let us go back to the creation. In the first place, God made a physical universe—and it was a universe of real material substance, not a mere chimera. After it was finished, including the furnishing of the world, there was no intelligent being who was so constituted that he could have an organic relation to the physical realm. The angels, who had doubtless been previously created, were purely spiritual intelligences. Therefore God resolved to make a rational being with an organ that would connect him vitally with the material world.

You know the beautiful story, which is just as philosophical as it is beautiful—how God formed man's body out of the dust of the ground; then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. He was a new and unique personality, a dual being, not mere body, not mere spirit, but both united in one person. The spirit was so constituted that it would have been imperfect without the body; the body so made that it would have been useless without the rational soul. Now, if God in so wonderful and supernal a way, created this new dual personality, is it not reasonable to believe that He intended him for eternal destiny in the very life with which he was originally endowed? Did He make this wonderful, complex organism called the human body only for a temporary purpose? We cannot think it. To our mind it is far more rational, and Scriptural, too, to believe that God intended the physical universe for an eternal purpose, and gave man an organ through which he might hold vital commerce with it

forever and ever. What a destiny this view opens up for man! With his spiritual faculty he may hold communion with God and angels and saints; with his physical organism he may hold no less living fellowship with the wonderful material universe that God has made for his habitation and delight.

The argument for this doctrine becomes cumulative. God's plan for the eternal redemption of the human body furnishes a powerful reason in the very nature of things for the incarnation of the Son of God. Had God intended to redeem only the soul of man, there would have been no vital reason for the Word to become flesh. It might have been wise and good, to reveal God's love for man and His sympathy for him in his distress, but that would not have been a reason *per se*—in the very constitution of things. He might have displayed His love and sympathy in some other way, for the resources of the Omniscient One are not limited, save by the nature of His own being and life.

If only the spirit of man was to be redeemed, Christ might have manifested Himself only in a spiritual way and offered only a spiritual sacrifice. For Him to become flesh, endure physical suffering, and rise from the dead would all have been a work of supererogation. It would have served no vital purpose in the redemptive scheme.

Take the wider view, however—that Christ came to destroy all the works of the devil, to restore man in his entirety to his original estate—and the incarnation has a sufficient basis. By his sin in the garden of Eden man had fallen. His sin was both spiritual and physical, and therefore brought upon him both spiritual and physical death. In neither part of his dual being could he do God's will or lift himself up into perfect communion with God. The gulf between the human and the divine must be bridged somehow, if man is to

be recovered. But no bridge could be thrown across from the human side, on account of man's sin and inability. So the chasm must be bridged, if bridged at all, from the divine side. That was done by God in the person of His Son coming to earth and taking upon Himself human nature in both parts, physical and spiritual. Thus the connection between the divine and the human was re-established in a perfect and real and organic way; and now, when men by faith attach themselves to the divine-human Saviour, they are brought back to God in the entirety of their personality.

However, Christ as man, both spiritual and physical, must live a perfect life in the world, so as to work out a perfect human righteousness for us; then He must suffer in His flesh and soul on the cross to make substitutional atonement for all our sins, whether of the soul or the body; then He must rise physically from the dead, ascend corporeally as well as spiritually to the right hand of God, and be glorified in His whole theanthropic person, in order that He may come in His own good time into vital contact with the bodies of the dead and raise them to immortal life, so that they "may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

It is because Christ lives in His glorified body, and only for that reason, that we have hope of the resurrection of our bodies. And the relation between His glorified body and our glorified bodies will be vital and organic, not merely mechanical. As He shall bring our redeemed spirits to Himself by actual contact, so also by actual contact He shall revitalize our physical nature and bring our resurrected and glorified bodies to Himself. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

In many places the Holy Scriptures impress this vital relation between Christ's resurrection and man's.

Look at Christ's pregnant words (John vi. 54): "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; *and I will raise him up at the last day.*" What can that mean save that the life of our Lord's glorified body shall revive our bodies on the morning of the resurrection? Note Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. xv: "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. . . . For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised." Do you not see how intimately the resurrection of the saints is related to that of our Lord? The apostle's argument is that if the saints are not to be raised, the resurrection of Christ would have been purposeless. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."

We have now shown with sufficient clearness and fullness, we trust, that the resurrection and glorification of Christ's body was the effective cause of the final resurrection of the saints. It shall be our further purpose to show that the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour has a still wider scope and design in the sublime scheme of redeeming grace. If man is destined to have a glorified body throughout eternity, it must be because such an organ is to have a vital relation to something akin to it in God's far-reaching plan.

What is that something? If man were simply to have eternal fellowship with purely spiritual beings, he would need no physical organism, and therefore the resurrection of Christ would have been a work of



superfluity. What was the original use of man's body? Surely to put him into organic connection with the physical nature which God had made. It was a real world of nature; therefore man had to have a real body. We see that he possesses such a body now, and that with it he comes into real and living contact with the physical realm; and we have not the slightest reason to believe that his fellowship with nature was any less real before he fell into sin; indeed, there is good reason to believe that it was far more perfect then than it is now.

Now, since God insists that man shall have a body after the judgment, it must be because He has fore-ordained an eternal destiny for the material universe as the dwelling place of man—if not for his dwelling place, at least for his delight. In providing man a glorified body, God surely is furnishing him an organ with which to enjoy such a universe in the most vital way and to the fullest extent. If this is not a part of God's great plan, it is difficult to understand why man should have a resurrection. Why not make him a being of pure spirit like the angels? Ah! but man was not created an angel in the first place; he was created a dual being, and, unless God should change his personality, he never could attain to the highest possibilities of his being without the recovery of his pristine estate—a perfect soul organically connected with a perfect body. If God wanted only angelic beings throughout eternity, why did He make human beings at all? Why did He not simply make more angels? No! it is evident that God wants such beings in the universe as men.

However, the realm of nature—at least, so far as this earth is concerned—is at present not well fitted for the happy and blessed habitation of man. Obviously something has occurred to disarrange the natural cosmos. There are earthquakes, volcanic erup-



tions, floods, tornadoes, diseases of many kinds, extremes of heat and cold, poisonous plants and insects, and destructive animals. Man still has through his body vital connection with nature, but alas! it often brings him suffering and death instead of joy and life. With one hand nature puts the draught of cold water to his parching lips; with the other she sometimes consumes him with a thirst that she refuses to quench. Sometimes she gormandizes him with food; again she starves him. Sooner or later she brings death to all her children, by accident or disease or old age. A world like this would not be a fit domicile for an immortal being, whether he possessed a natural or a glorified body.

At some time and in some way nature must have suffered a lapse. The world is surely far from being an Eden to-day. The Biblical description of the original garden cannot be made to agree with any spot yet found on the earth since the fall and expulsion of our first parents. What has happened? The explanation is at least hinted at in God's Word. Nature was made for man; but when man, its head and crown, fell into sin, the world that was made for his residence must have suffered a lapse, too—must have become partly disorganized. There are very clear hints of this fact in the Bible. The serpent, which originally was the acutest of the lower animals, though innocent of evil, was then condemned to be a crawling, clammy, noisome reptile, hated and feared of man and beast alike. In the light of this discussion let us read over again God's anathema upon nature after He had driven our sinning progenitor out of the garden: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for

out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Speculate about it as you will, if that passage does not explain the evils we find in nature, there is no explanation for them.

Is it not evident, therefore, that nature must also be redeemed? Surely, surely, if man and nature are ever to be restored to their primitive happy and perfect communion. We believe that God's remedial plan through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ includes the restoration of nature to her first estate. When the Son of God took upon Him the form of a servant, He also took upon Him the nature of the physical world. He bore that nature with Him to God's right hand, where it was glorified and endued with divine grace and power; and in His own good time He will bring it into contact with lapsed nature, which shall then be restored and glorified, converted into a blessed habitation of the saints, who have been redeemed by the same Almighty Saviour.

Now, let us see whether this is not the clear teaching of Holy Writ. First read Isa. xi. 6-9 (American Revised Version), which is clearly a Messianic prophecy: "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." Surely this is a promise of the happy time coming when there shall be nothing hurtful in all the realm of nature. 1 John iii. 8: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

Sin and death and nature's lapse were all the works of the devil, and so Christ's victory over His adversary would not be complete if He did not raise man's body from the grave and restore nature to her primal estate.

Now, let us carefully read Romans viii. 18-23, according to the American Revised Version: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Never was there a profounder philosophical statement made than that. It proves that God's design for the creation is not destruction, but deliverance from its bondage into the same liberty as that of the children of God. And note, too, that the creation and man are groaning and waiting for practically the same thing—the creation for restoration, man for resurrection. So when the glorified body and the restored creation shall be brought together, the year of jubilee will have come.

Our next passage is 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13: "Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." God's refining fire, therefore, shall not destroy

His creation, but shall simply dissolve and burn out the dross.

In this connection we may read Rev. xxi. 1-3: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Also verse 10: "And He carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain, great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

Thus the Scriptures teach that the earth is to be rejuvenated, and is to be the tabernacle of man—perhaps one, at least, of the many mansions of our Father's house. That the earth in its glorified state would be well adapted for man's residence and delight may be readily believed, in view of the many hints nature gives us even at present of her possibilities. Through what we are wont to call natural processes some things in nature sometimes become in a measure glorified. You take a homely root-bulb. It has no attractiveness about it whatever. Plant it in a black, mucky soil in which there is no more beauty. But now let the sunlight shine upon it, the rain refresh it, the soft breezes caress it, and see what it has become—a variegated flower, "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." Yet in its composition it is the same as the homely root and the black soil from which it grew. It has simply become glorified. If nature can do that according to the laws of her own being, what cannot God make of her when He touches her with divine, glorifying power?



One more thought, and a comforting one. Sometimes, in view of the immensity of the universe, we are almost overwhelmed with the sense of our own insignificance. The Psalmist felt the same littleness when he exclaimed: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou are mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" So we are apt to think that God does not care for such puny, insignificant creatures as we. He is concerned with the immensities. Why did God create a practically infinite universe, and yet, so far as we know, people only one little globe of it all? Would He have sent His only begotten Son to die for mere "worms of the dust"?

Such thoughts might well daunt us unless we have larger views of God's plans for the rational beings He has made and redeemed. Suppose God made man immortal, both in body and in spirit, will not man need an infinite universe in which to enjoy an eternity of love and research? Nay, the universe will be none too large for immortal man. To say nothing of the spiritual universe, which is infinite, too, we feel that it was worth while for God to send His Son into the world to become incarnate, to die on the cross, to rise again from the dead, to be received into the heavens until the time of the restitution of all things, in order to rescue and redeem such a being as immortal man and place him in the midst of an infinite physical realm to learn every moment of eternity more and more about the love and power and glory of the God who purchased him with the precious blood of His own Son.

A few words relative to the nature of the glorified body seem to be needed to complete our statement of the ultimate purpose of the incarnation and resurrection of our Lord. A study of Christ's resurrected



body will throw much light on this subject, which has puzzled so many people. There was a marked difference between His body before and after that Easter morning. After that event He appeared and disappeared suddenly. Though the disciples twice shut themselves in a closed room, He suddenly appeared in the midst of the company. Either He was there in invisible form all the time, or else He entered through the wall or the closed door. In either case His body was more like spirit than the material substance with which we are acquainted. At the time of His ascension He rose from the mount of Olivet into the air contrary to all the known laws of gravitation. Now, remember that it is said by the inspired penman that our bodies shall be "fashioned like unto His own glorious body."

The apostle Paul's sublime chapter on the resurrection (the fifteenth of First Corinthians) gives some hints as to the nature of the resurrected body: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in honor; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." Also: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." With all his dialectical force and acumen he argues for a physical resurrection, and yet so high is his conception of a glorified body that he adds in the fiftieth verse: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Then he adds: "Behold I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." All

of which must mean that the change from the natural body to the resurrected body is so complete and wonderful as to amount to a transfiguration; it shall not be like the gross "flesh and blood" which we know, and which would be only a clog to the progress of the spirit, but shall be beautiful and incorrupt and ethereal, the perfect organ of the purified and redeemed soul, yielding to every decision of the holy will, and yet at the same time making a perfect instrument for holding commerce with the glorified material universe.

Yet it must not be supposed that the resurrected body will not be the same as the pre-resurrection body so far as regards substance. Some persons, in speaking of a spiritual body, seem to mean that the material body is entirely dispensed with and permitted to molder forever in the dust, while in some way the saints receive a body that is composed of spiritual substance. There is no warrant for such a belief in the Scriptures. Job says, "In my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and not another." Nor is the idea of a body composed of spiritual substance in accordance with reason. Why should a *spirit* need a *spiritual* body? The spirit is its own body and its own substance. A body composed of the same substance would be no body at all. You might as well talk about a material body clothing itself with another material body. If the spirit is to have any body at all, it must be incarnated in a body composed of different substance. And there are only two kinds of substance, the material and the spiritual. Therefore our resurrected bodies shall be the same or similar in essence to the bodies we now have—that is, material substance refined, purified, transmuted, in short, glorified, completely subject to the sanctified spirits with which they shall be united. This prospective transfiguration of the human body ought to impose no difficulty on either faith or reason, for by what we call purely natural

processes all material substances can be changed from the coarse and heavy into the volatile or the ethereal; the homely iron ore into a molten stream that glows with roseate hues; the rough gold ore into a river of shining, iridescent fire; the black soil into lovely flowers of sweetest fragrance; noxious insects and weed-seeds into bright-hued birds; and all substance can be converted into the liquid and the gaseous forms. Everywhere nature gives us hints of the possibility of material glorification.

An objection that is often raised is this: How can the identical body be resurrected when the material of which it is composed is often scattered widely over the earth and enters into the composition of various plants and animals? It is thought that the resurrection of the identical body under such circumstances would be utterly impossible. To say that it would be impossible would be to limit the power and wisdom of the infinite God, who, in the first place, had to create every individual atom of matter, and, in the second place, has had to preserve it every moment ever since its creation. If He can do that—and He surely can, for He has—He can also raise from the dead at the last day the identical body of each person, if such a miracle is necessary. We should be careful how we try to limit the omnipotence of God.

But it is not necessary to suppose that God will bring together all the particles of matter that originally composed each human physical organism. Even in our brief temporal life on earth He does not insist on the identity of the particles year after year, but has so ordained that our bodies are changing all the time. The body of the adult may not have a single particle of material in its composition to-day that it had in childhood. Yet neither the body nor the soul has lost its identity. The man is still the same personality he was in his boyhood. There is something perduring

about the human personality notwithstanding all the changes that the years bring to the body and the outward conditions. So at the last day, after God's refining fire has gone through the realm of nature and has purified and glorified it, God can raise up from it such a body for each soul as shall please Him. Remember it is the soul that perdures without change of substance, not the body. The Apostle Paul makes this matter clear (1 Cor. xv. 35-38, American Revision): "But someone will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased Him, and to each seed a body of its own." It would appear as if Paul had here anticipated the objections of the skeptic, as well as some of the recent discoveries of science.

A last question remains for elucidation: Why did not Christ abolish death at once? The apostle says that the last enemy that *shall be* destroyed is death, thereby implying that death is not yet annulled, though it is robbed of its terrors for the believer. All must die eventually, saints and sinners alike. If Christ died in our stead and rose again to give us physical immortality, why must our bodies perish and lie in the grave for centuries awaiting the resurrection? Why is there not an immediate resurrection, or one on the third day? There must be some reason in the nature of things for this régime. We simply offer a suggestion, which may prove helpful, but we do not profess to speak with anything like dogmatism.

During this earthly life we are wedded to the flesh and the world. How much time, money and attention we bestow upon our bodies and in pursuit of purely worldly employments! How little time we give to our



souls and to purely spiritual pursuits! We are of the earth, earthy. The world absorbs us, and religion is only a side issue. To a lamentable extent our bodies are our masters—our bodies and the world. The sin of our first parents was simply this, that they choose the world rather than God, the earthly rather than the spiritual, and that worldly proclivity has been entailed on all their posterity.

This being so, perhaps we shall need a period of disembodied experience, such as God has provided for us in the intermediate state, when we may come into direct contact with purely spiritual realities, and thus cultivate and develop the spiritual part of our being, until by and by our souls shall become so potent and glorious that, when they are reunited with our bodies, they will be able to dominate them entirely, making them subservient to all the decisions of the sanctified will. In order to enjoy even the physical universe to the utmost, it is obvious that the soul must be the master, not the servant, of the body. An intermediate state, therefore, seems to be required in the nature of things to wean us from the disposition to prefer the world and to develop the powers of the soul.

While this may appear like speculation, we are persuaded that it is a helpful thought, and that it offers a rational basis for a term of disembodied existence. It may, however, be objected that those who remain at the last day and who are changed "in the twinkling of an eye," will miss this opportunity for spiritual culture in the purely spiritual state of existence. In reply we would suggest—and it is only a suggestion—that perhaps they may not need such an experience, because, in that epoch of the world's development under the influence of the gospel, they may have abundant opportunity for unfolding the powers of the soul, in order to give it perfect dominion over the body.



## XI

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

HE who believes in the infallibility of the Scriptures can have no doubt of the coming of a day when all nations and tribes and kindred shall be summoned before the judgment bar of God to give an account of the deeds done in the body. Indeed, the teaching of the Bible is so explicit and positive on this point that the only recourse the denier has is to challenge the inspiration of the Word. Christ went so far as to give some details of the mode of procedure on that day. He avers that the division of the human family will then take place, just as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. Some shall be placed on the right hand, and some on the left. Then He goes on to indicate some of the standards by which the sentences shall be declared; and in concluding He says: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Several of His parables, as, for instance, those of the pounds, the talents, and the virgins, show plainly that every servant will be called to account.

The inspired apostles are no less pronounced in teaching this doctrine. Paul declares: "So then we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ;" "Every man shall give an account of himself to God;" "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearance and His kingdom;" "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." Peter speaks

of the "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men;" Jude of "the judgment of the great day;" John says that "the dead, both small and great, shall stand before God."

These are all the quotations that are needed to prove that the idea of a general judgment at the last day is a Biblical doctrine. In the next place, does this doctrine agree with the conclusions of right reason? We shall see whether the affirmative can be sustained.

What is the purpose of the great day of the assize of the world so clearly prophesied in the Sacred Scriptures? It is to put an end to the present era; this era in which wrong so often prevails and right is so often nailed to the cross. In that day, according to the Word, God will put forth His supernatural and omnipotent strength to destroy sin and establish righteousness forever in His universe.

We would ask, Is it not reasonable to expect such an epoch in the world's history? Can we believe that the present hard and often unequal struggle between the forces of truth and falsehood will go on forever?

Suppose we should accept such a view, what a hopeless world this would be? Who would care to struggle and strive? In that case most men would not feel that it was worth while to contend for the truth. They would feel that their contention was a forlorn hope. Take away from the human heart the belief in a great day of the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, and you cut the nerve of all moral striving, and plunge men into a slough of despond. On the other hand, inspire them with the firm conviction that a day is coming when truth and right will prevail, and joy and peace and purity will reign supreme forever, and you put heart into them; you infuse into them a desire to get all people, as far as possible, to align themselves with the right, so that they may be on the victorious side at last and share in the joys of their Lord in eternal blessedness.

In the world as at present constituted justice is often unequal. The innocent frequently suffer, while the wicked go unpunished. Even the Psalmist said of the wicked: "There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm." More than once he found himself envious of the foolish and daunted by the prosperity of the wicked. Who, like Hamlet, has not often been disheartened by "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the pangs of despised love, the law's delay, the insolence of office?" Now here is the vital question, will injustice prevail forever? Or will there come a day when God shall put all enemies under His feet, and when even-handed justice shall hew to the line of righteousness and truth? If the latter, we have hope; if the former, only despair.

Some reply that the millennium will be brought about by the gradual evangelization of the world. However, that view does not seem to the writer to be borne out by the teaching of the Scriptures or the conclusions of a logical process. When Christ depicted the last day, the day of general assize, He represented the wicked by the goats on the left hand, and apparently there were many of them. How could that be a true picture if all the people of the earth are to be converted before the judgment day? Once He asked the question as if it might be answered in the negative, "When the Son of man shall appear, will He find faith on the earth?" What would be the use of a general judgment if all the people were enfolded in the love and salvation of Christ? Why should the wicked be represented as fleeing from the wrath of God and the Lamb, and calling on the hills to fall upon them? We are well aware that the millennium and the second coming of Christ are involved in some obscurity and that there are divers opinions on the subject; but this much seems to be clear from the Word of God—that the struggle between truth and error, right and wrong,

will go on, much in the same old way, until Christ shall appear in judgment, and assign to wickedness and its devotees their proper place, separate from the good and pure, and then shall come the era of eternal peace and joy.

At the present rate of winning men to Christ compared with the increase of the population, how long will it take to convert the whole world and make it an Eden? We confess that, while we believe that the world is better than it was some centuries ago, much better, spiritual progress has been so slow, and wickedness is still so strongly entrenched in high places and low, and is so defiant of all law, both human and divine, while the pall of spiritual indifferentism has become so widespread and oppressive, that we cannot bring ourself to believe that the earth is going to be imparadised by a gradual process.

The earth itself—we mean the physical cosmos—must undergo some remarkable change before it can become the elysium of the Christian's hope. Suppose that all its inhabitants were to become God-fearing, there still would be cosmical calamities—frosts and storms and floods and earthquakes—unless God should stretch forth His arm and glorify the earth by a wonderful miracle. And that is part of the program of the general judgment.

Moreover, God will not coerce men's wills. True, He will bring motives to bear upon them, and strong motives, too; but He will never go so far as to destroy men's free moral agency—that is, He will not compel men to be good and righteous, though He will punish them by force if they reject His overtures of love and mercy. Now, if God should so modify the world by a gradual process, making it so favorable to righteousness that men could not help being good, that would virtually take the spirit of freedom out of man. We do not believe God will do that. Rather, He will pursue



the plain course outlined in the Bible—let the world go on with its struggle, giving all men a chance in some way or other to accept salvation, until the “fullness of time” shall come, when He will bring the righteous to Himself in glory, and cast the wicked into outer darkness. That process implies and necessitates a judgment, and a general closing up of the present dispensation.

We would offer another argument for the doctrine of the general judgment. Everywhere in the Bible men are regarded as stewards, servants, workmen of God; and it is rational that they should bear such a relation to the God who has given them a being in the world. What would be thought of an employer who never would require an account or settlement from his employés? Of the banker who would ask for no detailed statement from his bookkeeper? Is it not a fact that in all the economic relations of life the employé must sometime give an account of his stewardship to his employer? So God will doubtless require an account of all His stewards.

Suppose men should live in the world without any feeling of responsibility for their conduct; that they can do as they please and will finally die, and that will be the end, without any thought of a tribunal; what kind of a world would this be? What would be thought of its moral order? Would not such license open the floodgates of vice? Nay, it is the prospect of a judgment bar that incites men to good deeds and deters them from evil. The day of final adjudication is a needed factor in the moral government of the world. It is one of the strongest sanctions of divine law.

The contention is often made that every man has his final day of judgment at the time of his death. It is asked, and with some show of reason, why there must be a general judgment if each man's destiny is



determined when he lays aside "this mortal coil." Our reply is, first, the Scriptures plainly teach that all the dead shall be raised and shall stand before God to receive their final reward. Nowhere in the Bible can we find any warrant for the view that the individual judgment given at death will eliminate the need of a great and mighty assize for all nations and kindred. Besides, when the end comes, there will be millions of people still living on the earth, and a tribunal will be needed for them. If that is true, why should not the dead rise and all people be finally judged at the same time and by the same standard?

It should be remembered, too, that the entire trend of Biblical teaching is to the effect that the intermediate state—the state between death and the resurrection—is only temporary. While the doom of the wicked is decided, full measure will not be administered till the resurrection of the body has taken place and the public verdict has been pronounced, when even death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire; which means, it would seem, that the very essence of death and misery will be thrust out of the heavenly portion of God's universe. And, further, while the righteous are saved forever, at death, and have received in the intermediate state all the blessedness which they are capable of enjoying, they have not yet come into the full measure of their possibilities until the redeemed spirit has been united with the resurrected and glorified body. The adjustment of all these things on so grand and tremendous a scale may well make a day of general judgment worth while.

Nor is that the last consideration. God bears many relations to the universe. Had He chosen to live in isolated grandeur, He would have been a God without relations; but after He made finite creatures, whether angelic or human, He Himself established relations with them that cannot rightfully be disregarded.

Therefore He must sometime justify His judgments before the assembled hosts of the universe of created intelligences. Private judgment would not answer. Angels and just men made perfect must behold and be able to applaud all the acts of God, or they could not be supremely blest. You remember the old question, How can you be happy, even in heaven, if you find that some of your friends are not there? That question and others that mystify us here in the flesh will be satisfactorily answered at and by the general judgment, which shall publicly and completely "justify the ways of God to man." Then we shall see that "the Judge of all the earth will do right." And when we behold the justice and mercy of all His adjudications, we shall acquiesce with acclamations of praise, and never again question His wisdom and truth.

Of the *modus operandi* of the judgment we can know but little; indeed, nothing beyond what the Bible teaches. Among other things, however, we may depend upon it that the judgment will be exact and minute. Everything in a man's life, his motives, his environments, the influence of heredity and natural temperament, his outward deeds, the amount of his knowledge, all will enter into the adjustment of his account. Even every secret thought and deed will be brought to light. Only in this way—that is, by taking everything into account—can an exact judgment be rendered. We may rely upon it that the scales of the Lord are balanced to a nicety that knows no defects. No man will receive either too severe or too light a judgment. When the impenitent sinner sees himself as he really is, when all his evil-mindedness is brought to light, when his neglect of God's merciful overtures is pictured before him as in a mirror, he will see why God cannot admit him into heaven, which is a place of immaculate righteousness. With no righteousness

of his own but filthy rags to commend him, and no heavenly righteousness imputed to him by faith, he would be no more fitted for a habitation in heaven than the swine, all besmirched from the wallow, would be fitted to dwell in a palace of gold.

There is another question on which we will venture a suggestion, though we frankly admit that our views may be subject to revision. It is this: Will all the sins of those who have repented and accepted salvation through Christ be divulged at the judgment, so that their inner and outer life will be uncovered before the gaze of the assembled multitudes of angels and men? There are some theologians who contend that such will be the case. They reason as follows: It will be needful, even for those who are saved, that everything be brought out into the light, so that they may be able to see their real condition and thus be convinced beyond a doubt that they have been saved by pure and unmerited grace, removing from their hearts the last remnants of self-righteousness. Such a revelation will also be necessary, it is maintained, for others, so that they may see just why each redeemed person has been saved—that it is not of merit, but through the free grace of God. When all the saved shall see as clearly as the sun that they have been redeemed only by grace, then shall the universal anthem of unmingled praise rise to the vault of heaven.

We confess that we are impressed with this reasoning, and if it shall be God's will to have it so, we think no one will have cause for complaint. However, we are disposed to think that the teaching of the Word of God is that, when the penitent and believing sinner's iniquities are pardoned, they will never appear against him again. God says that He will blot them out of the book of His remembrance. That could scarcely be true if He brought them forth

again at the day of judgment. It would prove that, after all, He had not forgotten them. He also says that He will cast them into the depths of the sea, which must mean that He will bury them completely out of sight. What would be thought of the idea of His digging them up from the unfathomable depths of the ocean? Moreover, He avers that He will remove our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west; and we know that opposite points of the compass can never come together. Thus we think the Scripture teaches that when our sins are blotted out, they are blotted out once for all, never to appear against us again. God will doubtless find some other way of convincing every redeemed person that he has been saved by grace alone.

Our next inquiry is, Who shall be the judge at the last great assize of the world? It is a comfort to know that it will be Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man. Not only is this view a great comfort; it also opens up a rich field of thought. Let us remember that Christ was human as well as divine; truly human; that He tasted of the cup of all human experience, whether of joy or sorrow; that He was tempted in all points like as we are, though without sin. What could be more fitting than that He, the Son of humanity, should be the judge of human conduct at the last day? He knows our life by actual experience. He will be able to make allowance for every weakness. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." By experience of the realities of human life He will know where human infirmity ends and human guilt begins. He will know the meeting point of human freedom and divine grace. Perhaps He could know this without the experience, that is, simply by an act of omniscience, but in that case there could never be so close



a fellow-feeling between Himself and us as there will be with Jesus, the Human One, as well as the Divine, sitting upon the judgment throne. What a comfort it will be to hear Him say: "My people, I know all about your toils and trials, your joys and your heart-aches, for I am a judge who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities, having been tempted in all points as you have been." Are we going too far into the realm of speculation when we say that we believe Christ's human experience will help Him in deciding the destiny of those who shall stand before His tribunal? Why not? His experiential knowledge of human life will temper His judgments, so that they will be neither too lenient nor too severe. Do you not believe it? At all events, it will bring Him into very sympathetic relation with His brethren in the flesh.

But, of course, it must be remembered that Jesus was divine as well as human. Therefore, being omniscient, He can make no mistakes in adjusting the balance in every case. That is precisely the kind of a Judge the human family will need. Can we help admiring the eternal fitness of the gospel scheme?

There is still another reason for upholding the doctrine of a general judgment. The Bible teaches explicitly, we think, that the general judgment and the resurrection of the body will occur at the same time; that is, the dead will then be raised, and in company with those then living, will stand before the judgment bar. Then all of the redeemed will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, transfigured into beings of whose glory and joy we have to-day only a faint conception. It is meet and proper that the general judgment should take place at this time, when all the inhabitants of the earth, both the quick and the dead, shall stand in one vast assemblage before God. What an impressive scene it will be! Will the angels and saints ever forget it? No, it will be an epoch in the experience of all immortal beings.

A few words as to the dual verdict that will be pronounced on the last day. That some will enter into life eternal, while others will be cast away from the presence of God forever, seems to be the clear teaching of God's Word. To our mind it requires a good deal of dialectical dexterity and sophistical dodging to interpret the words of Christ and His apostles in any other way; to eliminate the doctrine of eternal retribution from the Bible. Perhaps more people have stumbled over this doctrine than any other doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. Many persons reject the Bible almost wholly because it teaches the doctrine of eternal punishment. However, we may be sure of one thing—God will not consign anyone to perdition unless it is the right thing to do. If it were wrong, He would not do it. He will save all who ought to be saved, and will condemn only those who ought to be condemned. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne."

Let us look at this doctrine for a moment in the light of reason. What else can God do with those who have stubbornly rejected His grace and righteousness? Has He in the nature of things any alternative but to punish them? In their rebellious and defiled condition He could not take them into heaven, for that would introduce into that realm a discordant and corrupting element, and then heaven would not be heaven. But might He not cleanse them of their sin and then admit them into heaven? That question may be answered by asking another: Could He cleanse them of sin without their consent, without true repentance, or simply because they were frightened into pleading for mercy by the vision of hell? That would not be moral salvation. Salvation is not a mechanical thing. Sin is in the will, in the conscience, in the depths of the ethical nature; hence salvation without true contrition and repentance would be no salvation at all. God

will not save any man by compulsion; indeed, He could not do so without violating the very constitution of the ethical universe. There is such a thing as physical coercion; but there can be no moral coercion, because that would be the destruction of the very foundations of morality. We must remember that heaven is a place of internal as well as external righteousness; a condition as well as a locality. Therefore it is evident that God cannot admit the sinful and impenitent into heaven.

Might He not annihilate them? Perhaps He might; but the Bible does not say a word about the annihilation of the wicked. If it does, we have never found the passage. What does reason teach regarding the doctrine of the total extinction of the finally impenitent? It is little or no punishment to people who are steeped in sin and lust. Rather, many would welcome it; would be glad, indeed, if they could be sure there were no judgment bar and no existence after death. For a paltry mess of pottage they would barter their birthright to an eternal inheritance at God's right hand, if there was the prospect of complete annihilation after death. They would reason that, if they are to be totally destroyed, they will be conscious of no loss in eternity, and that will be almost better than life in heaven, where the denizens are occupied in doing things, anyway, for which the wicked have no relish. A heaven where God is worshiped continually presents no attractions to the debauched who care nothing for God. They would almost as lief be annihilated. The very fact that many wicked people are advocates of the doctrine of annihilation is *prima facie* evidence that it has no terrors for them. The only thing they really dread is the judgment day and the punitive justice of God. It is only the regenerated man, the man who has tasted of the powers of the world to come, who has experienced eternal life in his

soul, who loves God supremely and aspires for holiness more than happiness—it is that man only who really shrinks with horror from the thought of eternal oblivion and extinction.

Still, our thoughts need not dwell too much on the awful doctrine of future retribution. God has made ample provision for all who would be saved. He has put the means into their hands. No one needs to be lost. If any one is lost, it will be in the face of wooing love and proffered mercy. Every son of Adam will be given a fair chance, and we need not worry that God will condemn any individual unjustly, whether he lives in a Christian or a heathen land. Indeed, we have no occasion to desire to sit on God's judgment throne; for He who made the worlds and devised the scheme of redemption will be thoroughly competent to adjust the balances at the last day, so that no mistakes will occur.

So far as concerns the whole doctrine of eternal retribution, it is probably best not to think too much about it, especially not to brood over it, nor to speculate nor dogmatize relative to it. The fact is, it is a matter that cannot be satisfactorily determined by a process of reasoning. This will appear from these considerations:

First, you may follow the sentimentalist, who thinks only of the suffering of the victim and not at all of the maintenance of God's laws and government, and you may say such a fate for any person is impossible and unspeakably cruel. No man would inflict such punishment upon any creature, rational or animal. Everybody, Christian and unbeliever alike, shrinks from the thought of such a destiny for anyone. Skeptics are not the only persons who start back in terror from the thought of endless retribution. All Christians wish that some plan could have been devised whereby such a fate for the wicked could have been avoided. Sometimes the rabid sort of infidels speak of Christian peo-



ple as if they really gloated over the idea that any being should be consigned to everlasting woe. This is a gross canard. Christians really are more distressed over the fate assigned to the wicked than the wicked are themselves. If it were not so, Christian people would not toil and sacrifice and give of their means to bring salvation to people who have no other than a moral claim upon them. So the reasoning of the sentimentalist seems to give a verdict against this doctrine.

On the other hand, another process of reasoning seems to make the doctrine a necessity. What can God do with the obstinately wicked? He surely cannot admit them into heaven to disorganize and despoil that realm. That would simply convert heaven into pandemonium. Besides, tell all persons that they will be finally saved, no matter how they live in the world, and you open the floodgates of vice. The doctrines of the Universalist and Restorationist are dangerous to the well being of human society and government. And what is morally perilous is not likely to be true. Still more, for God to annihilate the wicked, saving only the righteous, would be contrary to the very constitution of things as we know it. Science teaches that not even an atom of matter is ever destroyed; how much less that infinitely greater entity which we call a human, rational personality! The doctrine of the Annihilationist is also jeopardous to human society, for it is a kind of punishment that the debauchee does not dread in the least. Why, the Buddhist even craves eternal absorption in the All of the universe. It is the highest achievement of his system of religion to transform himself into the state of mind when he is willing to lose his personality and self-consciousness. Only a short time ago, here in our own town, we heard a so-called "freethinker" publicly glory in the fact that the individual is ground out of conscious existence by the law of inexorable evolution, in order that the race

may be preserved. He even declared that nature cares nothing for the individual, but is concerned only for the welfare of the race. Thus it is plain that the prospect of annihilation has little or no terror for the sensualist and the materialistic philosopher.

So, one process of reasoning reaches the verdict that the doctrine of eternal punishment cannot be true; another process of reasoning makes it a moral and logical necessity. In the circumstances, what shall be done? It is best not to brood and speculate too much on the matter, but to trust God for the proper disposition of the wicked. We need not put ourselves on the throne of judgment. He who made this complicated mechanism, the material universe, and that still more complicated entity, the moral universe, surely can be trusted to unravel all the skeins of human destiny, and do right in every case.

One thing it is always well to remember—that the righteous are never threatened with eternal ruin; it is only the wicked, the perverse, the impenitent who are so menaced. Righteousness and truth are always extolled in the Bible; sin is always condemned.

Wisdom would also lead us to bear another fact in mind—that the Bible gives all men due warning of the doom of sin; therefore, no one can ever complain that he was not sufficiently admonished. The Bible also teaches that God, with infinite sacrifice, sent His Son into the world to save the lost and ruined human family, and the Son made infinite sacrifice for the same purpose. Therefore, no one can justly complain that God did not provide a way of escape from eternal wreckage. No exhortation, therefore, should be needed to induce all men to accept the overtures of divine mercy and grace.











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